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DEMS

EDMUND WOOD



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P O E M S

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P O E M S

BY

EDMUND WOOD

L O N D O N

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE

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DEDICATION.

THESE are to thee :—who gave me birth ;
Who did my infant footsteps tend,
And where they oft did falter, lend
The tenderest aid upon this earth ;

Who watched the daily budding ways,
And strove by kiss and word and care,
And hourly following of prayer,
To turn them right in every case ;

Whose being had bounds scarce large enough
To hold of love what sum was poured ;
Who so against wrong wishes warred
As made them faint for very love ;

Whose right was right as clear as light ;
Who did by hour and day instil,
And make the child by act fulfil
Her deep-sown knowledge of the right ;

These are to thee. Ah, time unkind
Hath wrought us severance deeper far
Than is from this to yonder star,—
The severance of mind and mind !

And what I held I hold no more,
Though taught and gathered at thy knee
With words, fixed in the memory,
That aye return as when of yore :—

Return or in the vacant mood,
When, brooding o'er the passing years,
Doth gently rise a mist of tears—
Touched by the lapse of childhood's good :

Or when the hymn first learnt of thee,
Low singing by my cot, is heard :—
Again I see thee read thy word,
Once mystic thought, now gone from me.

To me the grief ! let it not find
Thee overwhelmed :—thou taught'st me good
And joy in doing, which is food
And essence of the noble mind :

Thou showed'st the right—a way removed
From hope of self, from every thought
Of what it profits, is not sought
By those who have but pleasure loved.

Though we a separate path have trod ;
And thou with faith's eye see'st high,
Where I or doubt or do deny ;
We both, through good, do work to God :

—To God by good which all men know
By sense of comradeship, by love,
By force of trials borne, whereof
Our paths are set as by a foe :

—By good to God, the goal unknown,
Whose form is shadowed everywhere ;
Whom, though we know, nor ever hear
By sound of voice nor any tone,

Nor ever see, though eyesight keen
Could, up through myriad ranks of stars
Bending, yet on and onward pass,
Pierce from beneath and join again.

And if, as times extend more wide,
This knowledge come with their increase,—
We pass from earth to outer peace—
Then, through the good, I gain thy side.

But not for guerdon ! Not reward
Is that for which I hope and strive,
Is that for which I toil and live
In doing good, the sovereign lord !

In spite of sequent pain and ache ;
In spite of pleasure that doth warp
Our look on life and sets us sharp
Against its worth for its own sake ;

Though failing most when striving most,
And losing where I thought was gain,
And faint with foresight of the pain ;
Still onward press at any cost !

TO THE CRITIC.

My friend that with a gathered brow,
A pursed-up mouth, a casual quill,
Doth rush thy scathing words, until
'Tis small of worth thou dost allow,

Bethink thee !—to be just is hard :
—'Tis easy to be smart and rude ;
To vent whatever thoughts intrude,
And shoot them forth as just reward :

—'Tis hard to mete a proper praise
And give to earnest strife its due,
However faulty shows to view
What type the soul in work displays :

—'Tis easy, 'mong the varied sum,
To choose a want ; upbraid the deed
That is not perfect in its need ;
Abuse the word that is as dumb ;

To show how diverse and apart
The soul and form that should be one,
Like all that is from nature won,—
Pure form embodying perfect heart :

—'Tis hard to point the frequent fault,
And do it with a gentle hand,
And with a gentle manner bland,—
Not as from one who loves assault !

Yet am I wrong ! Work thou what way
Thy spirit would complete her task !
My words are weak. But this I ask—
Respect the work thou dost gainsay !

It ne'er was fixed in easy hours,
Like bubbles blown to pass the time,—
No idle snatches, set in rhyme,
Let loose, *sans* use, as sea-dropped showers :

But brooded o'er in quiet nights,
And fashioned 'mong the scents of morn,
When, calm of breath, strife not yet born,
Come holy thoughts and deep delights.

And pondered midst the ways of men,
Where life displays its varied flower :—
Who knows, than I, its dearth of power,
More keenly feels how weak and vain ?

And knowing this, or ere thy phrase
Be satire winged, thy sufferance lend :—
Save if to harm my verses tend,—
Give open blame and open praise !

It is not so. Like song of birds,
They pour not freely from the tongue ;
Yet have they love, howe'er ill sung :
Oh, hurt me not with slight-thought words !

For these, indeed, my children are :
Though one is ugly, one is blind,
And one hath more of stuff than mind,
I love as though no fault doth mar.

And, many a day, I've watched their growth,
And trained as best to make them right,—
To type what faintest store of light,
To me vouchsafed, of living truth :

To be to any who may pass
A power, however small, for good ;
A means to work as mental food,—
To stir the thoughts as winds the grass.

If then to censure thou art pressed,
Though never catering to the bad,
Though firm for truth, however sad,
To censure kindly is the best !

Tis best, methinks, to help the youth ;
And, where his ill-spced forces run,
Sustain him as with light of sun ;
To touch his brows if speaking sooth ;

To show what means will win art's palm ;
To point what evil ways he hath ;
To mark with warning hand what path
He will, by treading, turn to harm !

Still make that said flow forth as light
That hurts not, yet doth show by rays
The diverse forms and diverse ways,—
Hid until then in dark of night !

Deal kindly blows, though thou dost smite
Against the bad,—not harsh though strong !
For easy 'tis to judge of wrong :
'Tis hard to do what thing is right !

A DIRGE.

HARK ! the martial music, playing
Soft and low !

Its deep tones, so solemn, saying,
“ Now a soul hath passed away in
Peace, we know.

Him we lay below,—below.”

Him whom we above all other

Loved so well,

Loved with love as for a brother ;

Who care now their grief to smother ?

Do hearts not swell ?

As murmurs each, “ Farewell !—Farewell ! ”

Here we lay, where, cold and drear,

Doth stretch this ground :

Grey mounds of grass in rows appear :

The dismal trees their branches bare

Do wave around

’Mid deepest calm : no sound ;—no sound ;

Save, sobbing low, the mournful breeze
Breathes overhead :
Here alone 'neath sky and trees,
Within the hearing of the seas,
He's found a bed :
He whom we love, is dead !—is dead !

He whom ever, late and early,
Did we find
One whose mirth flowed alway merrily ;
One whose heart beat alway cheerily ;
And an honest mind,
So tender, true and kind,—and kind.

Let the mournful music reign !
All things do pass :
The past is passed : regrets are vain :
We cannot live the past again :
All fades as grass :
E'en memories fade : alas ! alas !

No. His memory as ensample still
Will kindle thought ;
Will keep from harm, from doing ill ;
Will strengthen Godward our weak will,
As erewhile wrought
His goodness, though we knew it not.

THE CROWN.

I DREAMT that I met my love
In the old manorial hall :
In his hand was a casket whereof
The workings were jewelled all.

He looked in my eyes as he paused, "Lo ! here,
This is the gift that I bring to thee."
And he opened the lid : from the jewels clear
Of a crown the light flashed wondrously.

It was shaped like the crown of an ancient queen,
Wrought with art so subtly,
That the eyes were held by its lustre and sheen,
And caught with the curves of its tracery.

And gently he pressed it on my head :
I felt the weight of its presence rare :
Then led to the glass, "When you are wed,
This is the gift that I bid you to wear."

I gazed at the glass and the image it bore,
Gathering at length its perfect device.
My eyes felt chained : as I watched it the more,
New meaning followed the turn of the eyes.—

I looked around ; there was no one there :
I turned to the glass ; it had faded away :
And the sunlight, streaming on carpet and chair,
Brought the joy of another day.

But I knew the meaning of that sweet dream—
That the life which we live may be goodly and fair ;
For the right-spent life is the crown supreme,
And brightest jewel that woman can wear.

TO A FLIRT.

“WHY! what’s the matter?” you do say.—
You think ’tis something caused a change.
I did not look so yesterday :
To-day my manner’s cold and strange.

Do stars above clear always shine ;
Or sun look steadfast from on high ?
Sometimes mists gather o’er the line ;
Clouds sometimes roll across the sky.

“Why change for mists and clouds? Is life
So feebly fickle felt and poor,
That we should, at each chance of strife,
A mortal change to all endure?”

You ask a question ! Shall I say
What pleasant sounds and seems of sooth ?
Your beauty dazzles sight away,
And—no ! you’d rather have the truth !

Because your heart I cannot feel ;
Because your wit sounds cold and dead ;
Is why your lures that formed my weal,
A day since, now pass o'er my head.

Because of lover's play, enough !
I find its pastime sickening sweet ;
And waste of time nigh all the stuff
That with such play we well can get.

Because the love which, make believe,
You wish, magician-like, to force,
Ne'er grows so well as to deceive,
And charm us in our holiest course.

Because I know such love's best flower
Is all too fine for every day ;
Will blossom not in every bower,
Nor flourish in all winds that play ;—

A sickly bloom, doth droop and pine ;
Is never worth a thought or care :
You, knowing this, may now divine
Why I a different aspect wear.

For this I hold, that life has worth ;
Has right to do and wrong to shun ;
Whose crown is love. You, first on earth,
Should strive to win, and keep, being won.

Though yesterday we played and laughed,
I felt a hidden wrong beneath :
E'en while at love we talked and scoffed,
I felt the wrong shape into breath.

And all your wit, however bright,
But makes that wrong the plainer now.
I do not hold my faith so light
That I should warp its truth, I vow !

A WOMAN.

Beatrice. "I would rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loved me."—*Much Ado about Nothing.*

SUCH a merry laugh !
An unfailing wit :
Ere is done your sentence half,
Ready with another hit.

Follows each emotion,
Quick as clouds on high :
Plain as words, you catch a notion
In each movement of the eye.

Talking in a breath
Of a thousand things,—
Law and marriage, men and wealth,
Love and war and psalm-singings !

Giving to your hand
Pressure as it lies !
Treading on the border land,
Where the verge of danger is !

Laughing at a thing,
Said in innocence,
When it hath a subtle meaning,
Far beyond its casual sense !

Yet but step too far !—
Say a word too much !—
And your hopes, like some bright star
Falling, vanish at a touch.

“ Make it up again ?
Never—while I live !
You thought indeed ? You thought in vain !
Well, some day I may forgive.”

A LIFE.

THAT life is so golden,
So glorious its hue,
That the light, once beholden,
Ever shines through and through
The drear after spaces of days, as stars through the
blue !

It comes not of thought ;
Is not got at a price ;
By reward is not bought ;
Is not won by device ;
Nor is fellow to pleasure on earth, nor to folly, nor vice.

It is playmate with none
Who strive after fame ;
It flies and is gone
At the sound of the name,
Of the man who seeketh men's praise, or who feareth
men's blame.

It follows not paths
Of those who are great ;
It flies from the hearths
Of the mighty in state,
Whose lives are at pawn to their fellows : and whose
breath is their fate.

It is friend not to kings;
It lives not at court,
Where pomp reigns o'er all things,
Where dwell fashion and sport,
Where shine the rich splendours of wealth that by
mortals is sought.

Nor in camps is it present ;
'Mid riot and drinking ;
'Mid sighs for the absent ;
'Mid pause of deep thinking,
When the brow is stern knit, and the heart with love
sinking.

It flies from loud mirth ;
From revelry coarse ;
From the gay sounds of earth,
When the laughter is hoarse,
And the fun groweth furious and frantic, and reckless
the course.

In hope is its life :
With the quiet of mind :
It is his, not at strife,
But with nature combined ;
As is he who renounces the world its stern secrets to
find.

It brings calm to the soul,
As the song of wild birds ;
As fine music, made whole
By deep meaning of words :
It is love, not thought on, nor striven for, but that felt
is, as is God's.

THE PRINCE'S DEATH.

IT struck him here ; for, as I looked to see
The knots of men upon the rampart's edge,
Him, turning to show best means of entry, quick
The bolt, like wild hawk's down-dash on its prey,
Caught in the armour's jointing : so sudden ! so
Remorseless !—the barbed head clung to the flesh
Quivering, I durst not try withdrawal. But
The boy, stoic as marble, with a wrench
Pulled at the shaft that, snapping, left the point
Deep hid ; and in a volume gushed the blood,
Staining horse, armour, and the saddle. Ah !
Its thought makes shudders tingle through the limbs ;
Pain catches at the heart ; and I feel sick.
But the old man, his father, at that sight,
With sharpened lines on brow and chin, spoke chill
And stern—" Ride, son, ride quick ! 'Tis but a mile
To camp. You, Psammis, haste ! beseech the king,*
At once he make a trebly strong attack ;
For shortly I will be with him." He spoke :—

* Sapor, king of the Persians.

I saw them on the further hillock's brow ;
And I could hear the thud of horses' hoofs
Grow faint and fainter ; and the boy, as he sat,
Reeled in his saddle, and his father's arm
Came out to hold him. Then the sweeping dust
From the grey plain came up, and they were hid.
Ay, and we made the attack ! But evermore—
In crossing ditch, in mounting wall and breach,
While rang the clang of armour, clash of arms,
And shouts and cries and groans and quick-drawn breath
And sobs that tell of hearts' pant, nigh o'erborne,
Just on the touch to yield,—that arrow's shaft,
The wrench, the boy reeling in 's saddle, came
'Twixt me and fighting. 'Twas a second self—
Not I—that fought : and clean has passed from mind
Of all that happed, save one who aimed his stroke
Fiercely, and easily I parried it,
And shore his head as 'twere a bleating sheep's.
And how the battle went I knew not, till
Quick came the cry, " Retire ! " And scarce was time
To gain our rearmost ranks and 'scape the foe.
And when I asked, " Had any seen the Prince ? "
" Nay, but the king is come," they answering said.
And when I could not see, " Yea, where ? " I asked.
" There."—" The great king ! Nay, but the king ?—
The king, Grumbates ? " And not one had seen.
Then knew I well the worst was :—my king's house
Childless !—our hope extinguished like a fallen star !

BY THE SEA.

“SIC ITUR AD ASTRA?”

PART I.

I LIE upon the beach alone,
 Seeing the sea's great ebb and flow
And pausing on the inconstant tone
 Of each wave's blow ;
Watching the myriad forms that dwell
Upon the line, impossible
 To number o'er or tell ;—

The crabs that quickly hie away
 Or out to sea or all about,
And as the footsteps die away,
 Shyly come out ;
The little worms that make the rings ;
The sand-hopper that springs and springs ;
 And a thousand shapes of things.

Or in the pool left by the tide,
Where floats the seaweed's pale green hair,
Mark the quick flight of fish that hide,
If ought appear :
The shrimps that rapid 'scape the hand ;
The skimming flat fish like the sand,
That scarcely can be scanned.

To such things is not life most dear,
Who scarce can feel its passing pain ?
Do they not love to hold life here,
As we are fain ?
Are its rewards not precious then
To them, or not delicious, when
So fleet they haste from men ?

And if earth's pause is loved so much
By these who yet think not nor know ;
Whose breath ebbs at the merest touch
Of ought below ;
—There at a pressure on this thing,
'Tis dead : it felt no pang dying,
Nor knew of any thing :—

Ay, if by them life is so prized,
And death so feared in every shape ;
Who by great nature are disguised
To make escape ;

What is not life then worth to me,
Who feel and know and think and see,
Have love and memory ?

Whose being is bound by many ties
With that of others who would grieve,
If 'neath the orbs of death's sad eyes
I ceased to live ;
Whose word may bring or counsel here,
Or there the sweets and aid of cheer,
And mirth's fresh laughter clear ;

Who, looking on the stretch of years,
As far as human mind can map,
Sees how the wave of progress nears,
—More full its shape—
Who strives to gain large knowledge first ;
And where its thousand fountains burst,
Can never slake his thirst ;

Who hopes by thought, with word and deed,
To make more clear man's life-ways still ;
Who strives to learn his depths of need ;
His founts of ill ;
The springs whence benefits do flow ;
The means that make us larger grow ;
Our points of joy and woe ?

Is there not promise in the time :
Is not our hope each year more sure :
May we not look to a sublime
 And perfect future ?
And what doth help to bring on earth,
And aid our hope's fruition's birth,
Is surely something worth ?

Now through this stretch of sand I pass,
 That with each footstep yields a trace,
To where yon spurs of arid grass
 Enfold the place ;
And see the red sun sinking bright ;
And watch the brown moths' whirl and flight
 In numbers infinite :

The bats that speed on noiseless wing
 In sudden twists and rapid gyres,
—Their shrill sharp cries quick uttering,
 As light expires,—
Or list the last song of the lark ;
Or note the lines of white that mark
 The rabbit's flight in the dark.

To these small things that show by fear
 Their love of what this world can give ;
Who flee at sound of footstep near ;
 Who ever strive,

By contest, to make large their ways ;
—To them what pleasures earth displays :
 What use and end of days ?

And we—than they, beyond compare,
 More vast—by spiritual sight,
Who gather of the earth and air
 And life and light—
As they, we too are right to cling
To what the lengths of days may bring,
 Though fraught with suffering !

We, who from these divided are
 By something that can bear no name,
Which lifts us high as yonder star
 Above their claim,
To use or profit in the scheme,
That doth, we know, this world redeem
 From being an idle theme !

We, having use that in the end
 Will sum to sum of glorious fruit,
And by our labour gradual tend,
 And by pursuit
Of what is right, to higher height,
Are right to strive by this earth's light
 To win the heavenly height.

PART II.

'Tis passed ! The sun's last rays are passed :
The clouds have lost their transient hue :
Unnumbered stars shine in the vast
Eternal blue :
A faint light shows where, at the verge,
Behind yon line of whitening surge,
The moon will soon emerge.

And Sirius, right against my face,
Glow's like an opal through the air,—
In diverse hues through this clear space
His rays appear :
And, ordered duly in its station,
Looks down with eyes of observation,
Many a constellation.

Slow to my feet, each dark wave's rush
Doth sound more solemn than before,—
With gathering fall and deeper hush
Their volume pour :
The sea in the dusk its heaving breast
Moves, as when one, in pain's unrest,
Can sleep not, nor win rest.

And far above, through outer space,
Beyond, beyond, and all around
The film of air that doth embrace
 This globe's small round,
Is silence that more deep doth fall
Than music's death when, over all,
Is placed the mournful pall.

Silence, whose bosom doth consume
 The noise of movements of this spot,
Whose calmness doth come down with gloom,
 And touch us hot
With feverish outbursts of this life,
With low contention, and with strife,
 And keenest war to the knife !

And I, this speck amid this size,
 This atom in this magnitude,
Who cannot know what he descries,
 For what am good ?
What use and what avail my deed,
Whose comprehension can but feed
 Knowledge of that I need :

Whose mental stretch can never grasp,
 E'en through a sign, this universe :
Who can but strive at thought and gasp,
 And moan, and curse

At man's mind's empty impotence,
And all the failure, the pretence
Of human thought and sense?

—This ray that changes green to red,
Which strikes me 'cross yon gloomy void,
Has, countless eras past, been bred,
Nor is destroyed,
Though traversing the fields of space
Of such vast size, at such a pace,
None can the thought embrace.

'Tis here ; and, even as we think,
'Tis passed what limits us surround :
Beyond the utmost verge and brink
Of this earth's bound :
Through other fields it passes on :
By other mightier worlds 'tis gone :
For ever ever on.

What is my life amid this sum ?
What 'mid this distance its import ?
My mind is shut, my mouth is dumb :
No thought is thought.
So small a life !—what can it work ?
Insects in their shell that lurk,
Can do as useful work !

HER FIRST LETTER.

Look ! what dull paper that was once so white !
And faded letters shaped so carefully !
'Tis thirty years since, with your fingers slight,
You wrote this scrap. 'Tis thy first note to me !

So long a time ! I gaze across the years
That glide, a noiseless current, at my feet :
And still thy face to me the same look wears,
As when I first its gentle glance did meet.

The same look I discern in thy fond eye,—
Perchance 'tis wan and faded to another :—
Thy lips close warm, as in those days gone by,
As when they kissed love's earliest warmth to
smother.

The hair is white that then was hazel brown,
And touched as by an angel's hands with gold ;
Yet to my eyes those former glories own,
Which did adorn it in the days of old.

And oh ! the smile that opens round the mouth,
Telling of love, and joy, and peace of mind ;
As warm as summer ; gentle as the south ;
And softer than the tenderest breathing wind !

A PORTRAIT.

HER cheeks were very pale ;
Her eyes a tender grey
That, meeting yours, did fail
And look another way,
With clear their shining depths as opening day.

Her soft dark hair was tied
A single knot, behind,
Drawn from her forehead wide
That typed her steadfast mind,
Smooth as a lake unruffled by the wind.

Her mouth whose pale lips closed
Speaking of reticence,
Smiled, when a thought disposed
With sudden gleam of sense,
Bright 'cross the all so quiet countenance.

Her answers came but slowly,—
She seemed to choose her phrase—
Said in a sweet voice lowly,
And aided by a gaze
That kindled as it sudden sought your face.

She did not move and laugh
As some few women do,
Who, like to wine you quaff,
Do seem to madden you,
Kindling the brain and being through and through.

With women of the world
Who smile and dance and sing ;
Whose lips, sarcastic curled,
Do pity anything ;
Whose talk seems ever like a hidden sting :—

With those whose thoughts are bent
On scandal spite and sneer ;
Whose minds are ever lent
To scratch the slight veneer
That hides the good repute of neighbour dear :—

With those who life's worth measure
By scale of fleeting joy ;
Who think that earthly pleasure
Is such as some employ,
That use the best of things but to destroy :—

With those who lead a life
Of careless ease ; who fare,
Thinking on aught like strife
To gain a higher sphere,
As misery that mars what sweets earth's are :

With such she had no part ;
Her thoughts were turned from theirs ;
She strove with mind and heart,
In spite of life's despairs,
To win the purer light that inward comfort bears.

Their thoughts, from hers divorced,
Met on no common ground :
She felt their best things worst :
They held her good things found
As empty of delight as insects' sound.

But unto those she knew,
Whose hopes with hers were knit,
She did unfold to view
Her wealth of thought and wit ;
And deep the pleasure theirs who witnessed it !

THE MIDNIGHT HOUR.

THE midnight hour !—quiet and calm
Rest on the shadow-looming hill ;
Down the dark valley runs the rill,
Repeating o'er its holy psalm.

In the dim west a zone of light
Tells where the moon hath sunk to rest,
That erewhile in the heavens expressed
Her moving majesty and might.

Around, the sombre trees uprear
Their forms ; the wind doth move the leaves
And stirs the ivy 'neath the eaves,
Moaning as one in grief and fear.

As in the hush I look above
And watch the spaces, spread afar,
With glories of each fervent star,
My heart is full of awe and love.

What is the message, to me the silence tells :

Whence come the thoughts that crowd the memory :
Why throbs the heart : why high the bosom swells :
And everlasting sadness seems to be ?

Is it that life now seems a more wide thing :

Now first at some calm midnight hour we know,
And, bare as light, we learn, not uttering
Our awe-sprung thoughts, the fact whence all forms
flow ?

We have not power to name the depths and heights :

We have not knowledge of things as they are :
Our strife is as a warrior's worn who fights
And feels his blows but vainly stricken are.

Lo ! all things present, things to come, things past,

Melt in the feelings of this mystic time ;
As when we sigh at touch of something vast ;
As when we view a sanctuary sublime.

For now we feel earth is one mystery deep,—

Wider than the attempt to measure the salt sea ;
Baffling as the thought to know the verge of sleep ;
Hopeless as the hope to grasp eternity.

What is it, is present ? What is truly here ?

The things we see are false as in a dream .

We see their lights : they move ; they change ; they
veer ;

And all we know is that they only seem.

In the quick motion of earth's common life ;

In the broad way, lit by the light of day ;

In the rough tumbles, bred of hourly strife ;

These awful holy moments slip away.

Yet, hush, and pause ! and lowly thou wilt hear

The pulse of minds, which is reality,

One concord deep that only doth appear

To those who wait the sight of things to be.

Still are the sounds that speak the march of ages !

Low its deep music, born of hopes and fears !

Only those can tell who have the hearts of sages,

The harmony of things,—one in all the spheres !

THE MONK.

THERE on the summit of the hill,
When, bright with rays, the sun did fill
The heavens, and lowly lingered still,
 Apart the monk did pace.
The white-faced chapel that stood by,
The home, the trees, the grass, the sky,
 Partook the quiet of the place.

At the ends of the path which he trod,
 He gazed on the scenes below ;
On the brown-backed fields whose sod
 Was turned for the sower to sow ;
On the hamlets, dim in the distance,
That chained the mind's eye with insistence
 Of man with his joys and woe.

He could mark the slow waving of trees,
 That shaded the lengths of the way :
He could hear their low murmur of breeze
 In the hush 'neath the heaven growing grey ;
And the cries of the yokels returning,
And the lowing of cows that are yearning
 For relief from the load of their day.

He could see the men thronging the village,
That stretched to the foot of the hill,—
Knowing their passions of love and of rage.
Their good deeds done, and their ill ;
And the various phases and forms,
That gather through life's brief storms,
Of action, and thought, and will.

And he !—far above in the calm
Sweet silence of evening air,
With the voices of eve, as a psalm,
Singing of peace and of prayer ;
Singing of shortness of days ;
Of the lapse, in life's prism, of rays
Whose hues gladden youth out of care ;

Of the noises and angry contention
That stir with the movement of life,—
As a wind on the face of the ocean —
With its shocks of anguish and strife ;
And the fruitless gains of the striver,
Consumed by his force of endeavour,
Destroyed by the edge of his knife ;

Of the malice of things and their scath,
That are dumb and feel not at all,
That are hard to the good in their path,
That are fond to the evil man's fall ;

Of the manifold chances that rule
The way of the wise man and fool,
And hopelessly blind and enthrall !

So to him—out of reach of harsh striving ;
Beyond all the waves of loud thought ;
Where the struggles and sound of men living,
Mellowed by distance, are brought ;
As the brightness and glories that kindle
Round the sun, as he sets, and then dwindle,
With beauty, not passion, are fraught ;—

To him come these sights that are seen,
That pulse with the blood of his being,
And, striking on chords that had been,
Recall the past deeds of his seeing :
But the tremor and sweet exultation
Destroy not the peace of his station ;
Mar not his joy in life fleeing.

And the village, the hamlet, the cattle,
The men, as they pass by the way,
With their love and their hate and their battle,
Are as hours of a bygone day :
For his thoughts, though quick with emotion,
Are as words of a dead devotion,
As the memory of love, passed away.

STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS.

THERE is no living thing but has its want :
Even the dusty herbage, feeding scant
Beside the desert's thirsty lips,
Is bathed with silent midnight dew,
The which its arid foliage sips ;
And, indiscernible to view,
The tiny forms that dwell in air,
The minute organisms, and every plant
Depend on their surroundings ; live and want.

Even by our weakness, we our strength obtain ;
And through our want of strength, to strength attain.
The hills and plains that us surround ;
Do but endure and are :
'Tis we that live ; we that abound :
They but exist, naked and bare :
They lean on self ; are self-contained ;
And at the end of ages, even as they were,
Not less, nor poorer, yet no greater are.

But we who change with every circumstance,
Who live by fate or law or turning chance,
—Even as a fire, whose flickering heat
Quick burns into a fervid ring,
Attains unto an aggregate,
And gathers to a glorious thing :—
Do we, thus gathering from around,
Depend on that and through our weakness buy
A glorious mastery, the light of life and eye.

EURIPIDES.

—AN old man, sitting in the shade,
Thus to himself doth say—
It is enough ! Ye gods, it is enough ! though now
The soft warm air, this spring day brings ; the light,
Broad through this slender screen, keep my old blood
Gently sustained within the veins. My worth
Of life is passed, and I no longer wish
To live.—Indeed, my past spent times were not
So perfect, their calm memory should make
Me want life greatly in the coming days,
Though now the moan and worry of dead years
Is as the sigh of wintry winds that brush
The door, sheltering sweet warmth and comfort.
Enough ! Ye gods, since now my toil hath borne
Fruit, nothing can reduce,—no envious thoughts,
No slanderous words betray. For all my life,
With its best flower of work in thought, was spent
But that it may enrich the keen quick air
Wherewith my country breathes. The arduous days
And nights of wearying grind that, up to this,
Did mostly meet a sere reward, have now
Ripened to such full fruitage as the world
Hath not before beheld !
For how can any, asking himself to choose

What guerdon were the best wherewith repay
Such toil as poets know, by searching, find
Reward to top this unexpected honour which
Now sudden crowns me? For even as I sat
Within, came one that said—"Thou great, who hast
New life and freedom to thy countrymen,
Imprisoned in sharp bondage, dealt ! for thou
Hast forged a hammer that hath struck the links,
Which bound their fetters, into air, being air
The means of freedom." So my crown of thought,
At which I laboured, hoping to touch my fellows,
Even to the quick, hath so touched foreign men
That, hearing, they were tender and released !
What greater guerdon would one wish to gain—
That, by my means, my brethren may go free ?
It is enough ! Ye gods. Now let me pass
To far Elysium whence, apart, I watch
The grand completion of what strange ideas,
I have on earth given utterance to,—at first
Unheeded, or much cavilled at ; but now,
Even in my old age, accepted, learned,
Their meaning greatly loved. Yea, let me go
Whither, if new joys come not, memory,
By jar of present shocks no whit disturbed,
Waits on good times in thought, and learns to know
What worth of present is slow-crowning life,
In future periods of more fashioned days,
With higher heights of goodness and such right
As we but feel the glimmering'st light of now.

THE HINDOO MAIDENS PRAYER.

THE Hindoo Maiden !—in her hand
Bearing her offering to the shrine
That, built upon the highest land,
Contains her God divine.

Before the image carved of stone,
Blackened by changing tongues of light,
She kneels upon her knees alone,
And prays with heart and might.

“Here I bring thee offerings fair,
Rice and betel-nut and ghee ;
Pice I bring and bright-toned cupra,
Such as maidens love to see.

“See, my head with blossoms bound !
Bright my nails in henna dipped !
On legs and arms did bangles sound,
As along the path I tripped.

Here before thy face I, kneeling,
Press the hands and bow the head :
Be thou kindly, gentle feeling,
While my meek petition's said !

Thou art mighty ! In the night,
While in sleep my brethren lie,
When the moon is shining bright,
And the earth is plain as sky,

Soft my eyelids slow unclosing,
Gaze I on the silent air ;
And I raise my head, reposing,
From my earth-wrought pillow bare.

For I know that thou art near ;
And though nothing can I see,
Straight I say my humble prayer,
That, great goddess, honours thee.

For a shudder shakes my hand ;
And my feet are numb and dead ;
And the silence in the land
Takes my heart with awful dread.

Or, when down the narrow way,
Where the rocks are heaped around,
And the trees keep out the day,
And the place is dead of sound,

Soft I tread with footstep frightened :—
Comes a rustling and a glow
Through the tree stems, sudden lightened :
Goddess, thou art there, I know !

Cold a shiver passes o'er me :
Quick I feel my heart doth beat :
Full of fear if e'er I see thee,
Fast I urge my flying feet.

Greater thou than all I know !
How can I thy praises sing ?
Mightier thou than earth can show,
—Sounds, that storm and thunder bring !

Goddess awful, grant me now
That my mother may be kind !
On the house much food bestow !
Let my brother not be blind !

May my husband, earning pice,
Cupra rich and bangles give :
May we have enough of rice
That the child and dog may live ! ”

VERLOO.

AN Indian village by a plain of rice !—
The child Verloo, therein, first saw the light ;
First took the outward shapes of things to mind
Whose image is our chiefest knowledge ; felt
The spread of light where lissome heads of rice
Before the fleet-foot breezes shimmer ; marked
The seas of green beneath the reedy tank,
Dark knots of round-limbed palm, or light-leaved neem,
That twixt the arid breasts of the grey hills,
Clothed of fantastic rock and sprawling scrub,
Show hope and brightness, as the well-known face
Among a barren crowd : or on those heights
Seated, did watch life's movement in the vale,
Till love from knowledge grew,—the darting birds,
In chase of prey, the crying pewit flap
His wings, or slowly drifting marsh fowl drop
Lightly beside the pool, the hovering hawk,
The twisting snipe,—so gathered to his mind
The image of this earth all beautiful.

Or, sitting in the grove, he heard at times
The ghostly rattle 'mong the wooden palm leaves,
The sullen thud of sudden-falling nut,
The sighing of the breeze, the splash of fish,
The hum, as the sun circles to the west,
Of myriad insects, and the call of birds
Innumerable, the faint-echoing shout
That urges on the toiling oxen through
The lumps of mud :—and thus the life and life
That circled round his village home, was known
To those still eyes and ears that watched the range
And flow of nature through her thousand forms.

Or, being a child, when in dark night he lay
Beside his mother on the cleanly floor,
Fronting the hut,—the fervid summer air
That seemed to cling to earth and roof and tree,
Making the vault of heaven lustrous with stars,
More bright than burnished gems,—he felt perchance
A touch, or heard a scarce-known cry which stirred
And made him ope his eyes ; then looking up,
Did seem to catch a sound beyond a sound
In that deep hush whose spell lay on the air
Above, on dark shapes of the trees, and forms,
Slumbering around, that seemed to him to bring
A message to his soul,—he knew not what,
But that he felt him filled with awful awe,
And sense of feeling indescribable :
Or followed in his mind the weird weird cry
Of screaming jackal, calling as they would call,

Who hunt the soul beyond the bounds of life.
Thus grew the child among his playfellows
Apart in deep imaginings of mind,
Being apt to learn and quick to feel and know.

And often the boy, tending his bunch of ducks,
Geese, or lip-licking oxen, watched a sahib,
His gun on shoulder, tramp the sloppy fields ;
Clad all in cloth ; covered his head—not bound
By twisted turban—would wonder what to him
Seemed all this show of things ; what life he led,
Arrayed so queerly, with peremptory talk
And bearing harsh. What did the strange man know,
To him unknown ? Could he, too, tell at sight
The sorts of rice, the signs of rain, or how
The flow of water must be stayed or forced ?
And had he thoughts about the steadfast stars ?
And was he moved to hear the jackal cry
At night ; and did he pray to see the clouds ;
And offer presents to the God who dwelt
In temple on the mounds' cope for soft rain ?
At least he did not know the palm grove way
To home,—the walk he loved to tread, shaded
By splintered palm leaves, bowered on either side
With lovely bright green shrubs, that made a sure
Retreat from the great sun ; nor how Lurdad
Wished marriage with his sister ; nor the talk
And gossip of the place,—the toddy man,
The munsif who could write, and Bomna there,
Whose fields were always rich in rice and corn.

What did he know, himself knew not? He could
Not tell. Ah! he knew Putna, where the lights
Glitter at night like fireflies, where the roads
Aloud with people passing, the bazaar,
Where all the riches of the world are stored,
And many carts and bullocks to be seen,—
People, whose goods so great, they could have meat
At least three times a week,—compared to whom
E'en the headman was not rich,—with wealth enough,
Almost, he thought, to buy some half the gawn,*
With toddy trees included! He too must go
To Putna, see the sights and learn the world,
As he had heard it of his father's talk,
Who twice had been to the great place!—

* "Gawn," village.

WHAT IS BEAUTY?

WHAT is Beauty? Who can tell
'Neath what form she wills to dwell?
She is here, I feel and know,
Where the ivies cling and grow.
Why 'tis beauteous? Who can frame
Words, will reach beyond the name?
Why are leaves, the violets hide,—
Why are lilies, opening wide,—
Or moss roses that to view
Show their shapes and glorious hue,
Lovely to each mortal here,
Whose heart is pure, whose eye is clear?

Who can tell the mystery
That beneath all things doth lie?
It is here, and it is there,
Where eye can see and ear can hear.

Every flower is beautiful
That the idle fingers pull ;
Every motion of the birds
Is as music without words ;
And the fall of feathery snow ;
And the light of evening's glow ;
And the calm of open night
Which the myriad stars do light ;
And the change of rapid cloud ;
And the noise of sea winds loud ;
All—all are thrilling to the sense
Of beauty, man's inheritance.
But what that glory, who can tell ?
We are boys that learn to spell.

What we love is lovely, true !—
Yellow, green, or red, or blue.
'Tis the sense within the sense
That discriminates offence,
And can tell where wonders lie
That critics scan with curious eye !
Oh Art ! oh Love ! oh prime
One sense of beauty in each clime !

INFLUENCE.

EVEN so ! Her hair is golden,
And, in the light beholden,
Shines like the flood of glory on Danæ that fell :
Her brow, like untouched snow :
Her mouth, a cupid's bow,
Of tender thoughts and joy and mirth the abode doth
tell.

Her eyes as heaven are dark :
But wherefore paint what all can mark ?
Limn her to his dull eye,
From whom her beauty doth not win reply ;
Who, touched not by what moves me,
Doth idly glance and see ;
Nor turn to scan anew
What thrills me through and through ?

As one a picture gazes on,
By whom the meaning is not won,—

Some simple landscape scene
Of cottages, a hill, a green,—
Doth thoughtlessly put by
What calls to mind and eye,
Or boyhood's time, now long since spent,
Still redolent of calm content ;
A hairbreadth venture, hardly 'scaped,
The after tenor of our ways hath shaped ;
Or some stern crisis of the mental life,
As in the bosom raged a gathering strife :
Whence takes the scene its hidden power
To charm and bind our latest hour.

So to my mind is she
A thought of ecstasy ;
A memory, to right deeds inspiring ;
A knowledge, all best motives firing :
But to another just a woman ;
As some are, fair ; as most are, not uncommon.

DENIAL.

EACH day I see thy lovely face,
And press with mine thy hand,
Look in those trustful eyes of thine :
Ah, how can I withstand ?

When youth and love do mingle wine,
And show a brimming measure,
How hard restraint—to stay the hand,
Nor quaff the cup's deep pleasure !

Let time to be uncertain show ;
Drear shape ; quick-veering mist !
Now all is heaven 'neath fancy's glow,
Our life by love acquist !

“ Can love be treacherous to itself ? ”
—Faint whispers to the mind—
“ Can love be treacherous to itself,
And be to love unkind ? ”

Not love is false, but life is strange :
We are not free to move :
As beasts unchecked, we may not range :
We have not right to rove.

Our lives are higher. If we fill
Each want brimful, set free
Our senses, bound not by our will,
Life turns to anarchy.

The birds do sing their lightsome measure ;
In brake and covert play ;
But though their life seems all of pleasure,
They live the harder day.

Our wish withheld ; our hope unblest ;
Denied what touch and see ;
Let body go *sans* food, *sans* rest,
So soul have liberty !

We cannot have—we oft must lose
What seems our best desire ;
And more we gain by what refuse,
Than what we do acquire.

Nor are we held by heavy laws :
Ourselves ourselves oppress :
And oft we groan—yet groan because
Our being's bounds transgress.

Yet love is love ; not ever lost,
 Though seeming without fruit :
Oft cherished most, oft aidful most,
 When voiceless lives and mute !

And its fine tendrils, round us wove,
 Right trained, can bear no blight :
Our soul's redeemer ! ark's fond dove !
 And spiritual light !

THE HUGUENOT.

She. Let me tie it?

He. Nay, dear it must not be :
It cannot be.

She. What is more sweet than love?

He. Why, nothing! nothing in the whole wide
world!

Wherefore we keep it clear from any taint.

She. And after death, where's love? 'Tis I, who
need,
Who want the love.

He. Not tarnished love!
Is not the soul, the mirror of myself
Wherein I see my deeds? and thee in me?
And all that's pure and clear in this foul world,—
I must preserve untouched and fair?

She. Untouched
Will be thy love! My dear, I love thee so :
'Tis thee, I need; not all the world beside!

He. Look up! Lift up thy face!

She.

I cannot.

He. Nay, lift ! Then I must take it in my hands.
The lovely eyes that swim in tears : the lips—
Oh, tender lips, that quiver in their pain !
I kiss them. My love, it cannot be.
I will not tarnish honour which is love,
And live a maimed man in thy sight.

She. My sight ! and maimed ! To me—a part of
thee—

The veriest tiny curl, touching thy brow,
Outweighs the whole world's worth. So slight a deed !

He. Significant of all ! How could I live,
Slighted by all—my friends from whom I turned ;
My enemies to whom I turned ? And soon thy eyes
Would change their light to me.

She.

Never, never so.

How will they change their light ? How could I
change

From that which is a part of me ?

He.

Or worse,

My eyes would change to thine : my face, apart,
Would seek the ground in brooding on these days
When I had sold my love. And thou, from me
Catching my melancholy, would'st sit,
As stone on monumental base ; and gloom,
And dark would reign.

She.

Oh, then thy love is slight !

'Tis best, being as it is.

He.

Nay, struggle not

To go. When, in the afterdays, thy eyes
Look back on this and these surroundings, thou
Wilt know it is not so. Had I not thee,
Who sum'st the world to me ; no ties ; no faiths ;
No hopes ; no thoughts of what's beyond, around,
And sequent to my deeds ; would I not change—
Not fly this evil time, then having no weight—
No import unto me ?

She. Deeds outweigh deeds :
And you, here present, outweigh the world to me.

He. But only now, not after ! If, in the tracts
Of days to be,—if such things be—my soul
Will come to thee ; and we in spirit speak,
As in the mystic way of saints ; and pure
In the undivided love and knowledge of
This life lived rightly.

She. Now only, I feel—
I only feel this time and thee. A little badge !
A little doubtful badge, in weight against
Thy perfect life !

He. What sums it not, though little :
What faiths : what hopes : what love ? Not size
nor weight
Nor multitude make worth ! Nay, darling, nay :
Oh, tempt me not ! There, there, I have it safe.

She. Mary in heaven, have mercy !

He. My life ! my love !
Is it not hard for me ? She's dead ; she faints :
Even so, 'tis better. Ah, the agony !

Christ's sweat—Christ's bloody sweat in the garden !
Those lips—those dear, dear lips constrained, I
 kiss—
I kiss for the last, last time.—I must ;
Or I shall fail. God's mercy on me and thee !

RECTITUDE.

OFt doth a still voice whisper in the ear—
“ If thou hast thought, fearless speak out thy mind :
What though harsh answers come, and words unkind,
Thine is the right ; be steadfast ; have not fear !
They are the worthless who such courses steer
As seem to lie before the prosperous wind :
No aim, a beaoning star, to them defined,
Save as ease shapes, or qualms, a light career.”
Yea, but the pain !—that we should gall their love ;
Should turn from ours their face and helping hand ;
Sever, for aye, sweet intercourse on earth.
“ Such each man’s fear, how rise to things above ?
Such all men’s choice, yet let the ages stand !
Pain must with change ; and costly is new birth !
Shun pain through life, how may’st thou work to worth ?”

THE SHIP.

THE ship we watched, her moorings slipped,
Pass 'neath the pressure of the breeze ;
Her prow slow ploughed the waves white lipped
And moving lengths of seas.

We watched her glide among a throng
Of feebler craft at peace that lay,
Cleaving her course, resistless strong,
Towards another day.

'Then dropped her sails, and each unfurled ;
And, heeling gently to the wind,
Calm on her way to a different world,
She left these shores behind.

Onward in thought we followed her
Through the dull ocean's snow-capped billow ;
O'er tropic seas where breezes stir,
Light as the moving willow ;

By fertile coasts whose bright green store
Stretch to the waves their verdant hand ;
By rock-fringed steeps whose yellow shore
Proclaims a rainless land ;

To some soft harbour, fair embayed
From savage storms by coral arms,
Where curious shapes of beings made
Grotesque the fair land's charms ;

Where skiffs, sharp beaked, of quaintest form,
With fruits of wondrous hue and size,
Ripe by the air perpetual warm,
Came up to tempt the eyes.

—And, as the evening drew apace,
The sun, long hid behind a cloud,
Touched with gold ray her distant face
Of sail and sable shroud.

A CHILD'S DEATH.

THOU'RT gone! Thy type is swept away ;
Thy earth form blotted out !
Where now thy laugh of yesterday ;
Thy play, and merry shout ?

And grief doth hold my inmost soul ;
But surely more of wonder !
What means the sound of death-bell knoll :
How can we be asunder ?

From thee to me a little step,
So easy bridged—we thought
Of no such gulf, thus in thy neap
Of life betwixt us brought.

The use who thinks on? Death may bring
Or purifying trial,
To raise the strength, or sorrow's sting,
To quicken self-denial.

It being so great ; and life's whole course
So seamed with neat occasion
In every act to practise force,
Or, failing, use evasion ;

So full of deeds that wake deep grief ;
So full of love and bliss,
Torn up by harm ; of dear relief ;
Why seek for such in this ?

Oh, face to face with mystery,
So human and profound,
Doth raise such thoughts, too deep, in me
In shapely words to round !

If life be symbol, what is death :
Is man's life tangible,
That gathers with renewing breath,
Abides but doth not dwell ?

BE NOT DOWNCAST.

“BE not downcast ; be not sad ;
Though the way is long and dreary !
Nought on earth is to be had,—
Nought of worth, untouched of bad,—
Save by toil and hardship weary.”

On through darkness drives the ship,
Buffeted across the main :
Gleams like snow each high wave's lip ;
And the sails and cordage drip,
Wet with never-ceasing rain.

Still within his ears do ring
Those sweet tones, he last had heard.
Loud the yards creak as they swing ;
Loud the storm cries wandering ;
Still he hears her precious word.

Seas may rage ! the storm winds blow !

They can never touch the soul.

Though around black waters flow,

Though the nights in tempest show,

Nothing can his love control.

He is hers for ever—ever,

While the stars do shine the same !

Though awhile their day-paths sever,

He is hers for ever—never

Bends to any but her name !

GUSTS OF WIND.

GUSTS of wind blow o'er the heath ;
Gusts of wind and driving rain :
Chilling is the tempest's breath ;
And it roars with fury vain
Loud across the plain.

Far the pathway winds along,
Bending over hill and vale ;
Bare of shelter 'gainst the throng
Of storm-blasts that moan and wail,
Striving to prevail.

Ever on she made her way ;
Never baffled ; never foiled ;
'Mid quick-waning lights of day,
Up the deep ascent she toiled,
Mud-bestained and soiled.

Fiercer, as she steps the plain,
Blows the gale against her face :
Deadlier rush the drifts of rain :
Quick and quicker doth embrace
Night the dreary place.

Far above her, giant hills
Tower around in solitude ;
And deep fear her bosom fills
At their sombre magnitude,—
Showing nought of good.

Low she moans in her despair,
Bending to the tempest's force,
“ Wild to me the way, and drear ;
Nought of love to cheer my course :
Nought but voices hoarse !

“ No strong arms to aid my feet ;
No kind light to mark the way :
On each side do troubles meet,
Gathering as the storm holds sway,
Wasting life away !

“ Cease from struggle ! Rest in peace ! ”
So she, moaning, lifts her eyes ;
Far upon her pathway sees,
Bright beneath the darkened skies,
Flame a star's glories.

Oh, weak limbs and wayworn feet,
Faint with toil and misery!
Yet, though furious storms do beat,
Onward ! and in time shall be
Safe a rest for thee !

Safe a haven, calm within,
Sheltered from the tempest's rage,
Thou at length, by right, shalt win,
If 'gainst earth-forms with true gauge
Ceaseless war dost wage !

Grander for thine upward strife !
Better for thy way's rough moil !
Starry glories crown thy life !
Deeper beauty ends thy toil !
— Only wrong can soil.

THE RIVER BAR.

“WILL you come out on the open sea?

The winds blow light and the waves are small :
Will you come out on the sea with me,
Nor fear it at all?”

The boat lies at rest near the river’s mouth,
Scarce moved by the touch of the wandering breeze ;
And faint are the lines, coming up from the south,
That make light seas.

But white over the bar foam the breakers away,
Though cloudless the sky and the winds blow fair.
“The billows may dash for awhile,” he doth say,
“But ’tis calm out there.”

“I will go out on the open sea !”
She answers, laughing a careless laugh.
“Nought is there to fear ; nor is fear in me ;
Nor a thought thereof !”

“ Have I not thee ? How am I forlorn ?

And the sea is beautiful and wide :

Let us row out where the sea winds are born,

Whate’er betide ! ”

“ Let us row out from this calm and dull peace,

Beyond the ridge and the lips of foam !

Not here in the quiet, but where waters increase,

Let us pass to and come ! ”

And he rows the boat : light ripples they make,

As fleetly they glide o’er the shallow lagoon :

Soon the sandheaps are nigh ; and the pine forests
break

The calm with their moan.

Full on his face shines the evening sun,

Dazzling his eyes as he bends to the task ;

And the waves come quicker, one by one ;

“ Shall we go ? ” he doth ask.

The waves come higher and slip beneath,

Rocking the boat as it moves on its way :

With a touch, and a pause, and a tight-drawn breath,

“ Yes,” doth she say.

The river bar looks narrow and deep ;

And black the current runs apace ;

And ’tis there the waves foam, as they inward sweep

Meeting face to face.

Though slight looked the surf from afar, yet nigh
The breakers roar loudly, as they rise in the air,
High tossing the boat ; and shrill comes her cry,
“ I have fear ! I have fear ! ”

The billows, rushing past with a roar and a hiss,
Splash over the gunwale and reach o'er the prow ;
With a slap they are caught ; and her cheek with their
kiss
Is wet as they flow.

Faster scud the dark waters ; more rapid they fly,
Like the rush of a stream as it passeth the weir :
Half rising in terror, again shrill her cry,
“ I have fear ! I have fear ! ”

“ Peace ! calm thee, my darling ! the danger looms
great :
Yet fear not the roar, nor the rush, nor the hiss !
Work steadfast thy work ; and soon will our fate
Pass from that side and this.

“ 'Tis too late ! We can turn not nor change. But
thou !
—Steer through the flood with a high-strung will ;
And trust thou to love to shield thee, e'en now,
From the harm and the ill.

“Love cans’t thou trust not in? Let love be thine
aid!

And the terror that holds thee, be firm to control!
And the danger will pass; and the dread will fade;
And strength come to thy soul.”

In silence she waits; for his words give power,—
Give strength to her spirit to master its fear:
Yet strive as she will, as the breakers o’er them lower,
Comes a moan, flows a tear.

Till at length the waves lessen; they dash not nor
throng:

Yet still feels she terror; for still they are tossed;
And still sways the boat: and oh! she doth long
For the calm she hath lost.

So gradual they make their way to the sea.

“The winds blow light and the waves are small
Here!” he doth say—“Here wished you to be:
Here is true peace on all!”

She thought of the peril in silence. “My love.”

Then answers—“’Tis good—’tis best to have done.
See! calm bows the evening and the stars shine above:
Life has worth being won!”

DEATH OF THE VENERABLE BEDE.

It is dusk on the stems ; it is gold on the leaves,
That clothe the top boughs of the circling wood :
It is dark on the walls, but the spires and the eaves
Of the grey-worn abbey are kissed by a flood

Of glowing sun rays. They, with sudden light,
Glance in a room. The old monk said,
“ It is done.” “ Once more ! ” saith he who did
write,—
The pale-faced scribe with the shaven head.

The words drop slow from the faltering lips ;
The light pen flashes with hurried stroke :
Need is of haste ; for the bright sun dips,
And fast goes his strength as the upgoing smoke.

And round sit his pupils : in silence and fear
They watch the face and the labouring breath,
And wet are their eyes with the frequent tear,
For they know the hour and the presence of death.

Again the words break. "Is it done?"—he doth ask.

"At last," is the answer, "'tis finished now."

"Yea," he replies, "so is ended my task :

Finished is all ; and the truth sayest thou.

"I have worked my work, and striven, and fought

For the word that is truth, and the love of God.

Now is shaped my life's term ; my life's song brought

To its finishing close. The way is trod—

"Finding me here, and my best toil done,—

The hope and completion, my glory of life :

Finding me here, and my last wish won :

Now cometh rest from the business of strife.

"Happy whom death finds armed to the fray,

Red in the conflict for country and home !

Him, not the fear of the fateful day,

Nor the thought of the end or chills or turns dumb ?

"Him not the brush of the whistling sword

Checks, nor the sight of the bright blood's flow !

He in his love for his land hath reward ;

And death is sweet at the hands of the foe.

"But only in fight is not life's end grand !

Only in battle not all of worth found !

Each hath his conflict, and work for his hand,

While the hours of his days do orb them round.

“ Each hath his fight ; and, though happy who dies
Face to the foe with his breath hard drawn,
Happy is he, too, with the might that is his,
Who strives for God’s glory, that truth be upborne ;

“ Who labours for His right, that justice prevail :
Who toils for His good, which the kingdoms shall
know :

Happy is he ! Though the dark earth veil,
Bright be his fame in its afterglow ! ”

Thus spake the sage, and his words were oft broke
By the sound of their weeping who gathered around.

“ Peace be upon all ye ”—so gently he spoke :
Then covered his head, and knelt on the ground.

“ Finished my work ! But Thine is the praise,
Not mine who am servant, but Thine who art Lord ;
Whose words came soft at the closing of days,
At the morn’s uprising, keen as a sword !

“ Words did I speak, but Thine was the voice !
Hopes gave I utterance to, Thine was their breath !
Chill now my hands and my feet ; but, oh Voice,
Relive I in Thee warm, not cold in dark death ! ”

He died. But the fruitful seed of his toil
Died not, being life of the life supernal :
Lived and yet grew through the hard time’s moil :
For men do pass, but the Word is eternal.

"I HAD A FRIEND."

I HAD a friend, and now that friend is gone !
—Gone from my sight the face of many cares,
Worn into greater beauty than is seen
In youth's first flush and rounded cheek, by work,
By self-repression to gain mastery,
Unwearied toil to win the peaks removed
And far-off heights, new-touched by morning rays
Of the sun of knowledge, whence low vales and
 plains,
With hamlets—clusters of old thought—beneath
Descried, give best emotion to the seer,
And fashion love for every form of man :
The spacious forehead seamed with furrowed lines :
The steadfast eye in whose dark deeps revealed
A world of calmness, o'er whose boundaries
The whirls and storms of passion never rise,
Unseemly breaking peace, but all is turned
Of force or heat or kindling phantasy
To useful products in the soul's domain :
The firm-closed mouth, symbol of inward strength

Gained in the fight, yet o'er whose sternness spread,
Like sunlight sudden breaking through dull clouds,
The rarest smile that ever shone on me :
The tall spare frame : the white slow-moving hands,
Then trembling with the uncertain powers of age,
And feeling slowly along the accustomed ways !
All now are gone : from earth's paths he is gone :

I had a friend, and now that friend is gone :
Yea, who to me, indeed, was more than friend,—
Prophet and priest : who led the youthful eyes
To see life with large gaze : who aided the mind,
Then all too cramped by narrow ways and work,
To see the larger issues in each thing,
However seeming slight ; to feel the love,
—The breath by which we live—flowing through all,
Highest and lowest,—beauty, spirit, strength,
—Names diverse for one essence ;—to catch the right,
Not blinded by pure hatred of what seemed
Evil-disposed in others, hidden deep
At times, yet everywhere, whereby within
What wrong is, best is turned to worth : who strove,
By acts, the outcome of unconscious thought,
For art—true spring of worth in men and man ;
Sole means of better gained from common, best
From the better ; mother of soul-kindling work ;
The sun of virtue ; star of kindred promise
To nations ; foster-nurse of all of earth,
Divine of nature, that to heavenward tends ;
Worlds' worth of gold ; the rainbow of the time !

We raise up costly monuments of stone,
To signify us dead ; statues we place,
To mark completion of a prosperous life ;
Tablets inscribe that tell in gorgeous words
Of barren meaning,—what the worth of deed,
His that here lies ! And most for self still strive,
Not for repose or peace,—to round their days
In quiet to a lovely end—but fame,
The noisy glittering jay that loudly calls
Your flashy day-long weak performances,
Heroic products for the times to be
To look at and to marvel ! Monument,
Enduring as the triple gates of hell,
High mausoleum, or peaked pyramid,
That asks a tribute nation's fulfilled labour,
Statue, or shrine, or tablet for no man
Possess such power to fix the age's eye,
And in quick time keep record sure as is
The honour of a well-begotten son !
Man lives by his descendants and his sons
Are future life to him. If one desire
A peaceful end,—his memory a green spot,
With flowing water, whereat after-times
Keep festival and to his glory build
Still fanes of reverence, silent sanctuaries
Of love, unseen to eye but tangible
To any whose delight is worthy,—he
Possession of such dear rewards doth gain,
Who dowers his nation with a faithful man,

Begotten of his loins, and trained by love
And foresight to make visible life's ways,
To be a light to lighten earth's dark paths,
To feel the truth and manfully fight for it.
So such was his ! Peaceful his father lived,
And none took special thought of an old man,
Perchance a piece of immortality,
Larger than all he met with, yet was meek,
Nor asked observance of his spirit's wealth.
So too the mother ; else could she give birth
To one so perfect fitted at all points.
Depend such lives on no vague winds of chance !
Oh, men ! choose noble women for your wives,
To rear our coming English race more grand,
More lofty in their views and aim, more strong
To cope the sordid spirit of the age,—
So raise the nation nearer that excellence,
We see and know of and are not ! Since good
Comes not, save where each acts as if in him
Compact his country's being. Oh, Time ! bring us
More open hearts ; more power of self-denial,
To sacrifice the self to the general use ;
More love, the bond of human brotherhood,
The sense that marks the gathering worth of man !

PAN IS DEAD.

SEE, all this earth ! how beauteous to the eye
 Beneath the touches of the white sun's rays !
 The broad green sward : yon single tree that lays
Its shadow coolly round, whereunder lie
 The cattle, each aloof,
 Revolving the slow cud,
 With lowered head and tucked-up hoof,
 Upon the broken sod !
The vagrant clouds their light reflections throw,
And for awhile obscure the fervid glow,
 Ranging over the waving grass,
 As change quick moths that pause and pass ;
While a light breeze fans the tender leaves below.

Yonder, the bosom of the surface curves
 Down to the vale where runs the rivulet,
 Along whose banks are drooping trees thick set
And curving ferns ; and as his way oft swerves,

Wears here a precipice
And gathers to a pool,
There hurries on with just a hiss
Through darksome glades and bowers cool :
The sun rays, struggling, catch the leaves and glance,
And mingling with the waters, seem to dance :
The birds in hazel copse and brake,
Singing, their liquid music make :
And rare wild flowers the low dell's charms enhance.

Below a grotto, hid by shrub and bush,
Entwined and wreathed with many a wild festoon
Of creeping plants whose tender flowers soon
Wither in noontide heat ; within a hush,
More than a cloister's deep,
As still as starlit space,
As pure as, when asleep,
A baby's moveless face :
The vivid moss upon its sides and floor
Spread their soft hair ; and fragile ferns that more
Love the dark shade than blaze of day,
Here hide their delicate leaves away,
Turning for light to the narrow-hidden door.

Afar the blue sea spreads its face beneath,
As calm as he who hath a benison :
A white mist blurs the distant horizon,
Binding the margin with a bridal wreath :

As if in mimic war,
In ranks the light waves pause ;
Then to the opposing shore
In hurried marchings course :
Their noise is as the sound of children's laughter,
Untouched by thought or care of ought hereafter ;
Who in perpetual holiday
Live on their life of joy and play,
And sing sweet songs that all men's hearts do stir.

So all is beautiful, my eye perceives !
The sea is beautiful—and but the sea !
The green trees wave their branches tenderly :
They are but trees with myriad fluttering leaves !
The slender brook its course
Doth ever ever run ;
It doth its work ; perforce
Its daily task is done :
The shrubs upon the comb side bend and fall ;
And sweetly splashing sounds the waterfall :
The cattle browse the waving grass,
That bows as low the light winds pass :
Though beauteous, they but mute still objects all !

It was not always so ! In times now gone,
Ere Universal Pan is dead,
All things were full of life and love : forlorn
Was nothing man inherited.

Across the meads at break of day,
Silvanus, piping, led the way
The flocks to pasture : round his feet
They gambolled at those pipings sweet.
And oft the god I did espy,
Watching when the dawn was nigh,
With down-stretched hand his loving vassals greet.
Now none can hear his pipe's clear tone.
Great Pan is dead ! Great Nature is alone !

Oft in those days, within the wood's deep shade,
Where branchèd trees did make a little glade,
I loved to lie prone on the ground,
O'ergrown with periwinkle and such flowers
As wildly flourish in those dark-green bowers,
With eyes half shut, when, lo ! a sound !
And straight I knew the Dryad of the tree
In the deep stillness that there seemed to be ;
And, looking up, would catch a glimpse, and see
A lovely face and form,
With deep dark eyes and bright cheeks warm,
Who fleetly passed behind the gnarlèd tree :—
Now she is gone !—such sights have gone from me !

Or silent wading where did bend the brook,
Saw in the pool, quick vanishing,
A lovely form and face,
The guardian of the stream and place,
Who could not wait the sight of mortal look,

But fled with a splash and a gleam :
And nought was left but a widening ring
Upon the water, to tell of her, now gone—
Now gone for ever from the stream ;
And solitary left the place, and me alone.

Or in the eve, and silence in the dell,
I'd catch faint sounds of music clear,
And know the nymphs that therein dwell
Were dancing in the twilight air,
Who at a footstep's beat straight disappear,—
Now never music sounds ; nor their light laugh I hear.

At times beside the running sea,
I'd hear a Nereid singing her sea song,
Far from her sisters and their throng,
In low notes mournfully,
And like a dirge,
Or the sad sound of the slow mournful surge :
And watch her comb her green hair out,
Or dive to join her sisters in a rout,
Dancing and playing on the lucent wave :
Or mark a vagrant Oceanid,
Of darker hue, and deep blue hair
That wildly fluttered in the air,
Who if ought rude did nigh appear,
Straight in the bosom of the water slid,
And hied her to her distant cave.—
Now never such I see ! Their face from me is hid !

And oftenest, walking the slippery path that led
Beside the dried-up watercourse's bed,
And near the grotto's hidden door,
Would hear a footstep pass before,
And see, retreating in its dark recess,
The Oread that did dwell therein,
Who with her love did sanctify and bless
The precincts of her dwelling round,
That harm could come to none within its bound,
Who holy were and free from hurt and sin.
The place is lovely yet : yet now not holy ground !
For she is dead :
The shy Napææ fled :
And without spirit-life is grot and dell and river-
bed.

Yea, now Great Pan is dead.
And dead are all the Naiades ;
And dead are all the Dryades :
The Oreads show not in th' accustomed places
Their gentle faces :
Now none can hear the Nereids singing by the shore ;
Nor never more
List to the piping of Silvanus old,
Or sounds, the presence of the fauns that told ;
Or in dark glade
Hear the light beat of feet, lighter than step of
maid.

And all this beauteous earth that once of yore
Was full of whisperings of another world ;
Whose every movement on the plain and shore,
Patter of rain, or sound of dead leaves, whirled
By the quick wind, was pregnant with a life and being
To me, who fed with love on nature, seeing
Or household god, or nymph, or faun,
In all whate'er these eyes did dwell upon ;
Is now a thing of dead stuff, though of lovely shape,
By land and sea, on mountain, plain, and cape :
Is lifeless now without a word
Of those who once within its being stirred :
Dead stuff and empty, void and drear and bare ;
No sense beneath the garb its lovely shows do wear.

CHARLOTTE CORDAY.

WAS it not right? How can I doubt of it?—
Though still the awful harsh voice rings and rings
Within the caverns of the mind ; though still
The monstrous seamèd face, in writhing pain,
And all its quivering lines, is in my eyes
That will not change their subject.—Right?
I am republican and yet noble !
The misshaped laws, did I not hope removed?
The galling statutes, did I not long to alter?
The grinding ordinances that beat down
And spoilt the people's lives, did I not want
Repealed? Whose views more clear than mine?
Hopes fervider? whose trust more boundless? wish—
As bright as yonder brilliant moon ! that this,
This time be fruitful everyway with use ;
With fitting laws to help the people's wrongs ;
And statutes aidful to th' impoverished state :
That murmurs, sullen as the moaning sea,
Might pass : that bitter discontent and fear,

Dogging the daily step, be changed to love :
That peace might reign, and gleeful plenty throw
Armfuls of corn around :—the people glad,
With sweet prosperity to trim the way,
With hopes of future shrouded by no gloom,
With certain right to cull their own, become
A healthful toiling joyous nation—not
The downcast and malignant-looking race,
We saw on all sides ? I too hoped that change !
We all did hope !—each one, right minded, who
Knew of the cruelties of those black times,
—Less black than now !—who felt the barbed and
bright

Keen head of stern oppression entering in
And throbbing with the live heart of our people ;
Who saw the hourly heavier load of wrongs,
With hourly quicker-growing knowledge of
Their deadening pains, bow down more lowly still
The bent back of the patient folk ! Those felt,
Who dwelt beside such misery, their hearts
Swell with a sob that straitened in the throat ;
The eyes drawn by a woe beyond the strain
To tears. Ah me ! the intolerable times !

And when the prospect opened as the east
Lightens at dawn ; and we could feel, as close
And strictly tangible, the means to alter
These all-spread harms ; reverse the wrong ; root out
The many-headed evil ;—with thrill of joy
And sweet emotion, deep as when a mother

Fondles her just-born child,—we clasped the means ;
We learnt its ways : it only was our thought.

Then came these later days ; with blood and war ;
The nation mad for cruelty ; led on,
Incited by this group of things,—hell hounds !
Born devils sent from hell, incarnate, full
Of every poison that perverts a man !
And most this Marat ! I indeed was right !
What is this life, and precious, but to do
Good deeds ? which doing, careless let it run forth,
As a handful of sand from the open palm,
All unconstrained ! The fear ? Now I am weak,
As these still midnight hours brood over : then,
Strong ; looking nor to right nor left but straight ;
Braced with a thought that made life dwindle to
An utter insignificance ; not foiled
By foil of any hopes ; nor faint-hearted grown
At thought of difficulties. And yet ! and yet !—
Still that cry echoes : again I see that sight !
—Am I not Corday ? Shall I be weak and faint ?
'Twas right to do ! most welcome, being done !
Since that the nation will have calm, and from
My act shall date the date of peace and love !
'That my reward :—my fever-stricken race
Again has quiet, and space of years to bind
To a firm surety of concord and great love
And true fraternity, their elements
Confused !—

CHANGE.

WE floated down upon the stream,
Between the banks where willows grow,
While, lingering yet, the sun's bright beam
Dwelt on broad fields and meadows low :
The birds sat twittering 'mid the sedge
That bind the green bank's sloping edge :
Distinct the splash among the reeds :
Furious the stir of insect life :
Rapid their noise of perilous strife,
Among the branches and the weeds.

The current gently bore the boat :
No stroke of oar was needed :
Past island, reach, and curve we float :
By light winds scarcely speeded :
We watch the lily's flower and leaf ;
The long weeds flickering underneath ;
The lights and shades below the bank,
Or round the flag stems, growing rank.

I look into her perfect eyes :
We speak in gentle lazy tone :
Around the calm of sunset skies :
The way is free ; our time our own :
The subtle influence I feel ;
And love's delightful fancies steal :
Why not resign to passion's force ?
With her, how sweet life's onward course !

—The sun has dipped beneath the verge :
The shades are gathering fast :
Yon broadening plumes, he high doth urge,
Can never never last.
Sights change, and other sounds succeed :
The ploughmen 'cross the meadow speed ;
The bat above on silent wing ;
The lonely stars ; the breeze sighing.

And, while around the twilight's shaking,
Between the shadows we steal back :
No noise but what our oars are making
And water rippling on our track.
Love is strong ; but life hath change :
Fancies alter ; love may range :
E'en as the glories of yon sky
Turn to but greyness, and quick die !

HOPE.

Love, and wilt thou say me nay?
The breeze is blowing mournfully :
Grey scud the clouds across the sky :
Love, and wilt thou say me nay?

The soft rain falls upon the leaves,
And patters on the gravelled drives :
The sky is heavy : dull the day :
Love, and wilt thou say me nay?

What, nay? And with thine eyes that glance
All bright with truth's clear radiance ;
Thy tender lips,—soft plays upon
The loveliest smile on earth e'er shone !
Thy low light laugh ; thy gentle way ?
Love, and wilt thou say me nay?

What to me are dreary hours :

What the sense of earth foreboding :
Dwell not still, like wan dead flowers,
Thoughts that memory aye is holding ;
Keeping, fondling in its gaze,
Hopes, long lit of former days ?

They are kin not to these skies :

They are parcel of the dawn,
When the sun in beauty lies,
Breathing light o'er vale and lawn.
May such be mine ? Say, darling, say !
Love, thou wilt not say me nay.

LADY HAMILTON.

THE day is fiery hot, the bright sun's rays
Beat upon housetop, pavement, and the length
Of upright streets, strong as a furnace blaze,
Its door quick opened, burns against the hand :
The thirsty breeze licks up the whitened dust :
The glare of brightness, thrown from everything,
Strikes the pained eyeballs : birds with beaks apart
Gasp for cool air : in scraps of shade dogs lie
With open jaws, flanks heaving and glazed eyes :
Only the flies, swarming around the heads
Of slumbering men and cattle, show a sense
Of life and movement. Here up the long street
The sweating porter leads, thence entering
A small courtyard, ascends a creaking flight
Of wooden steps, and hardly opes a door :
Again a flight, that shows an empty room :
Through the open window, whence hot puffs of air,
I see the housetop tiers and, far below,
The glaring street. "This way !" I follow him—

A ladder to a loft conducts. I mount,
Peering around as to the level come
My eyes. "Ugh ! what a place !" The gable window,
Low at the floor's edge, shows the distant roads
And far-off spots familiar. The air,
Pent 'neath the thin tiles, makes thick beads of sweat
Start instant from the brow, and clamouring seems
To catch at the throat. Here in the corner stretched
On ragged mattress, lay she who had been
The loveliest woman of her day, the queen,
Sans rival, of a crowd of beauties ; she,
To a nation left a legacy by him
Who chief had held that nation's power intact ;
A wretched thing on wretched pallet thrown !
Her thick black hair, now left her only trace
Of former beauty, dishevelled round her head :
Her eyes, lack lustre, gazing on the dark
Above : her miserable cheeks, deep lined,
Glazed with the grease of fever sweat : her mouth
Infallen, whose arid dry lips moved and moved
Incessantly,—lips once so beautiful,
Luscious as grapes, bright as the rose, that showed
At every turn sweet thoughts' expression sweet !
The worn-out coverlet betrays her form
As lean as miser's, empty of ought but bone
And loosened skin, that once compact of grace
As Grecian statue, fixed the eye of man
When moving through the mazes of her dance.
She heeded nought : in a trance she lay—her mind

Playing with the pleasurable fancies of
Past scenes ; living her old life back what time
In all the gorgeousness of wealth she dwelt,
Not dreaming of this latter bitter end. "What, you?"
She said, "You here!"—she took me for another—
"The ships are gone, I tell you,—sailed last night!"
Then turned, she muttered, now in tones of love,
Anon entreaty, argument, beseech,
Expostulation, or gay bantering talk,
Reply, or equivoque, or repartee,
Followed by cackling sound—like former laugh,
As noise of frogs is to the rippling stream's.
What use to mar the fever's phantasy
That present easement brings? I left the loft,
Scarce able to find the ladder's top. Thank God!
She died in comfort.

BALANCE.

DEALS no poet right or wrong,
Life dividing by a line :
To one side make this belong ;
To the other that confine.

If he favours one or other,
Places one 'neath other's form,
Best for him his strains to smother ;
Hide what strength in him flows warm.

All of life holds worth to him :
Not he, choosing, has the power :
Let the glass be never dim,
Where he mirrors man's quick hour.

Life is open ; and of wrong
Who can judge of, as by weight ?
That, to some by rights belong,
Fair though seeming, bears its fate.

That, to some is full of evil,—
An unbroken train of deeds,
Shown by God, or force, or devil,—
Grows to glory by their needs.

Can we balance, change and fasten
Harm or use, as one a brooch,
While the running seasons hasten,
And the stars do seem to watch?

While the concord of appearance
Is unbroken, let it be!
Let the poet's musings glance
With all things, he seems to see.

He not knows ; he can but show
What is conscious to his thought :
What to him the fervent glow
Of life's bounds to being brought !

Call it wrong, or pain, or evil ;—
Call it God, or love, or good ;—
These but names that not unravel,
What is that, hath really stood !

And his right keeps but one measure—
Fits it true with all we hold ?
Keener sorrow ; deeper pleasure ;
Purer shape ; more glowing gold ?

THE OLD BOOK SHOP.

THEN from its case I take the ring,
And place it on her finger :
Smiling she looks at the bright thing,
And her lips in a kiss do linger.

Dark is the shop with heaped-up shelves,
And smelling of musty books ;—
No place where lovers sun themselves,
And feed on tender looks.

No spot is it that, soft with grass,
Gives treasure to the thought ;
Where sougling breeze doth pass and pass,
As if for love it sought.

“ To tie the pledge in place so odd,
So mean, how could you, dear ? ”
Sighs she.—“ Nay, it hath grace, for God
And love are everywhere.

"HER EYES ARE BLUE."

I. (1)

HER eyes are blue as the sea,
When no cloud moves in the sky ;
And, like it, their depths to me
Change, as a quick thought passes by.

Her mouth is full as a flower,
That bends 'neath the weight of a bee,
Whose sweetness he doth deflour,
Murmuring his joy unconsciously.

Her hair as silk to the hand ;
Glowing as gold 'neath the sun ;
Soft as a breeze o'er the land
Bows the pale corn ere harvest begun.

Her step in motion and pause,
Like the slip and fall of a stream ;
Now onward moves in its course ;
Now, staying, loiters in a dream.

Her voice as varied in tone
As the many sounds of the air,
When summer rides in the zone,
And the fields are green, and white the glare.

I. (2)

Wayward sleep has fled, this midnight hour, my
pillow :

I find no rest :
This and that way tossing, like a broken billow,
Struggling oppressed.

Then I ope the casement and see o'er all things
shining,

With placid beam,
The steadfast moon above, in whose soft rays reclining,
Nature doth dream.

Away far o'er the fields and meadows gently sweeping,
Over sombre trees,

By river, house and hamlet, its light on all things
sleeping,

In perfect peace !

And outwards to the spaces, where, faint with too
much light,

The stars shine dim,
Still deeper seems the hush ; the calm most infinite
To the utmost rim.

Why comes to me no rest ; no balm of night reposing ;
 To me no quiet ;
Why, ceaseless, rush quick thoughts that keep the
 eyes from closing,
 The blood in riot ?

'Tis that the wand of love has touched with touch
 enchanting,
 Quickening through all,
And wakes with its turbulence, as earthward sun rays
 slanting
 Kindle and fall !

I. (3)

Once more I sit where I have oft been seated,
 In the old place I love ;—
The old familiar sights once more repeated,
 Beneath, around, above.

Beside me in the book-shelf are my books,
 —I know their several place :
And from the wall each well-loved picture looks,
 —The lines of each I trace.

The table, littered o'er with vagrant scrip :
 The paper, pens and ink :
The arm-chair, with its many a rent and rip,
 I sit in when I think.

Still in their ordered places, as I enter,
 They wait and look at me :
Theirs no cold welcome as chill touch of winter,
 Who wait so faithfully !

Can they then feel the changes that have passed ;
 That alter all things here ;
That make life seem a hurrying quick and fast,
 A throbbing and a fear ?

Can they perceive in mien, and voice, and sight,
 The change such as I feel ;
And can they see how love has lit his light,
 And I burn from head to heel ?

How the air is pure, and the room is full of sound,
 And her face is here,
Looking on mine, as when our hearts did bound
 At a word spoken clear ?

Can they, my friends, who long have known me only,
 With their still speech and pause,
When the night was dark, and the world to me was
 lonely—
 Can they not read the cause ?

Why the mood is changed, and the old habits altered,
 And the fixed times dispersed ;
Why the foot, once sure and steadfast, late hath
 faltered,
 And what was last is first ?

They are my friends ! Have they not lived with me,
Now these long tedious years ?
Do they not know my hopes, my thoughts, and see
They not my laughs and tears ?

My joy at the sight of a letter, sometimes lying
Upon the table's face ;
And the thoughts its reading gives ? Oh, Love un-
dying,
All things thou dost embrace !

I. (4)

My love, I love you so !
'Tis past the power of speech !
That you should love me too
A little, I beseech.

The air is full of you to me ;
The light shines dead and cold,
Whene'er I pass apart from thee,—
Insatiate longings hold.

My heart is faint with looking up,
Knowing thee far away ;
Is dead within me as I strive ;
Is drear as winter's day.

I cannot think but you are there ;
I cannot read but you appear ;
I cannot speak, but there rings clear
Your tones within the ear.

What would I give that this fond pain
Were done—this sweet tormenting smart ?
The days are long, and I am fain
To ease my loaded heart.

II. (1)

Again I strive, again I strive to fly,
Like a poor bird with fluttering pinion broken :
It is in vain—in vain I try ;
I cannot go without a last word spoken.

I watch your face ; I cannot read its thought ;
I dreamt I knew its every quick expression.
Now all is changed : I know you not :
In a strange tongue you speak your mute confession.

When in the east at dawning of the day,
I watch the clear light slowly broadening onwards ;
Singly the stars resign their sway ;
And o'er the trees the halo gathers sunwards.

White lies the mist between the massive boughs,
Soft as through the hair the touch of fingers moving :
The leaves are still, and the hills' brows
Bright, as a face that looks on faces loving.

All still at peace ; not yet begun the strife ;
Still calm and low, the sounds of Nature stirring :
The throbs and pulses of this life
Gentle, as not of future war inferring.

I alone am dull and ill at ease,
With no sense of rest nor quiet of the dawning :
All else is full of tender peace ;
All else hath hope and light their love adorning.

II. (2)

And the earth is now forlorn :
Dreary meet the plain and sky :
All the light from heaven is gone :
Mournfully the breeze goes by.

And my heart is cold as a stone ;
And my eyes do loathe the day :
Every voice is as a groan :
Passed my light of life away !

Let me return but once again,
Ere life divides for ever :
But once return, although 'tis vain,
Ere we for aye do sever ?

My hands are bound ; my feet are tied ;
I cannot move or stir ;
I wait, I watch, whate'er betide,
With eyes growing wearier.

'Tis better not ! You do not know
The listless moving hours,
And deadly days. Ah, God ! 'tis so !
The strain o'erstrains my powers.

I cannot wait ; I know I fail :
Oh, grant me what I pray —
One meeting more ; a last farewell !
Then take my life away.

III. (1)

I see thee as thou art,—
Silence and quiet in the place ;
The vacant air ; a depth of sorrow in
Thy melancholy face !

I am the cause? Unwittingly!
God knows, not with intent!
I'd spend my life to render back
To thee thy prime content.

Who could foretell?—a laugh, thy mirth,
A softness in thy mien and air,
Thy mouth, a talk,—these should give birth
To love's so deep despair?

It is the fire that purifies!
Am I as gold or lead?
Thou art the fire, oh sacred eyes!
Oh, bright adorable head!

III. (2)

Thou knowest I must go. There's something stronger
Than us, although impalpable as air,
Perforce that drives us helpless to do wrong, or
Urges to the right course and fair.

Am I not as other men? Of bone and flesh,
And good hot blood, coursing through the veins;
Alive to every thought of yours; each wish;
Awake to all your pains?

Therefore I dare not, lest in the after days,
Looking on mine, thy face, struck o'er with tears,
Should come to rob me of these, thy memories,
To be to me as props through the labouring years.

That is the prize, for all the pain and suffering,
Thy blanched face, the flaccid hours and inertness,
That this sweet time shall ever hang around, and
bring
Joy in the thought, not years need bring redress.

IV. (1)

"There is a meeting 'cross the vale of years."
So spoke you, softly whispering.
Am I to wait for what, when death appears,
The chance of death may bring?

Thou hast no strength of love, who thus canst speak
With eye so firm, so steadfastly.
Ah, no! Forgive the thought! 'Twas false and
weak;
Spoken amazedly!

The present time to us can have no change:
Our mutual love is far too sure.
Why chance it, put to trust to unknown strange
Impulses of the future?

Because the love is sure ! Can I not wait !
Is pleasure not at all in greeting ?
In the warm touch of severed hands that late
Late linger in their meeting ?

In the quick-snatched glance of the brightened eyes ;
In the sudden glow of face with face ;
In the strange comfort, in mere nearness lies,
Like the knowledge of heaven's grace ?

And the future days, whose grey-hued forms stand out,
As figures thrown on thick night air,—
No touch of hope, to cheer the deadly rout,
And give me promise fair !

"Than love, is there no thing in life to reap :
Is there no noble fight to fight :
No grandeur, that thine honour thou wilt keep,
And I, my troth—by right ?"

Is it not hard to lose so sweet a thing ;
That hath such fragrance in its breath :
For it is sweet ; and in its course will bring
Heaven's joys to us beneath ?

"Thou now dost tempt me who shouldst aid !" No
more !
Let silence fasten upon all !
The right ! Farewell ! "It is enough !" Nay, more.
Now drops my one time's pall !

IV. (2)

One lingering pressure of the hand ;
And I am left behind :
Your light across the darkness gleams :
And I am left behind.

It dwindles and it fades away :
Night's shadows close and fall
Upon the trees and hedgerows bare,—
They gather upon all.

You on your way alone ;
I lonely on my way :
And every moment in its march
Bears us more far away !

My love, I cannot tell my love ;
More deep than life to me ;
Higher than the highest things above ;
Wide as the worlds can be !

It is farewell ! The years will come
And pass as a running stream :
And never shall my eyes gaze
On thy so much loved face,
Save in a rapid dream.

V.

YEARS AFTER.

Lo ! thine the eyes, I see ?
Comes the sweet voice to me,
 These long years after ?
'Tis but a word said ; then
Strange faces intervene ;
 Others' smiles and laughter.

And is the face, I saw,
Less strange than theirs ? Or more
 Alive or more dead
Than that which to me comes,
When the evening breeze roams
 Round hair and forehead ?

Is that face passed, and not
Revivified now : forgot
 Clean, as chance pathways ?
Appraise we things, now new,
Even as in youth we do,—
 In fresh and rathe days ?

This is not she, I knew !
Her with the eyes of blue,
 Shall I keep ever

Mindful of ! not brow wide,
Nostril with touch of pride,—
These knew I never !

These do I judge of straight
Nor pause ; discriminate
Such traits are of her :
Change or no change in me,
These do I feel of thee ;
Thee now discover !

To us,—harm or no harm—
Came the sweet earth's balm,
Ere thought of future.
It was not right but wrong !
Yea, but to mere dearths belong
Deaths. Live not too sure

Wrong may not bring to right ;
Stains not at last grow white ;
Sins be all sinful !
Open be life, and wrought
Plain as the light is ; sought
On earth here in full !

Follow we the deepest impulse
That way where the heart pulls,
Where we feel beyond !

Mark not our code by laws
Set fast ; but if hope draws,
And we can see land !

Then, was the sinful there ?
Yea, and in hurt we bear,
Gain we purgation.
'Tis scorn, doth lead to nil !
Thus work to nature's ill
Annihilation.

So 'mid wrong done, our hope
Only is to grow ; its scope,—
Wins it us far gain ?
Yet not with far-stretched eye,
Use chance to barter by :
Life is no bargain !

No, but with foresight gained—
" Hardly the wish maintained ;
Footsteps will falter :
Hardly the hope believed :
Never the life achieved :
Actions do alter."—

Keep we the heart serene ;
Fond to what sins have been ;
To failings tender ;
Ready the hand to grasp,—
Needs but that aiding clasp
As its defender !

We know not whither tends
Strife, nor to what side lends
 Any the least deed :
But to none we judge fault ;
Nor on any make assault :—
 So sums the best creed.

Thus judge I myself ; write
Folly to words that smite
 Thee with their banning.
Am I one,—with surety knows,
How the inner life grows ?
 Worth how it can bring ?

So the past dies ; and we
Perchance a while live : thee,
 Sometime my life's star,
Drawn on to larger ways,
Ever may a good hope place
 Beyond where strifes are !

DRINKING SONG (ROMAN EMPIRE).

Chorus.

By the purple dark clusters,
That hang from the vine ;
By the vats, where the must is
An ichor divine ;
By the jars, when the crust is
Cemented as brine ;
Drink our wine ! our good wine !

First the gods !—their bowl is filled—
Drink we you, on high are dwelling !
May our adverse fates be stilled,
As to you our praise is swelling !
E'en as ye willed,
Are our lives filled
With songs of joy or death-notes wailing.

Fill the second bowl : up fill !
Hail, ye heroes ! What !—ye rather

Turn sour look and glance of ill,
Than, complacent, aid us further !
The third then fill
And drain it, till
'Tis done, to Zeus, our saviour father.

Yea, frown, ye heroes !—you, who stern
Wear the chaplet leaf of glory !
From whose rigid brows we learn
Worth and strength and famous story !—
Though cheeks may burn
Still, aye, and men yearn
To hear your deeds and battles gory ;

Frown !—we care not for your blame :
Glance with eyes and tight lips scornful !
We would not your austere fame :—
Joy would have, and nothing mournful !
Then pledge the same,
Friends ! and to love's name,—
The fair one's—drink in many a hornful !

Hail !—we want not life 'mid toil :
Hail to you ! your actions worthy !
Fame ye had ; nor time doth spoil,
Now are dead,—with earth are earthy
Ne'er will ye assoil
Us, who enjoy will
Soft ease in ways, ye thought unworthy.

—Feasts and riot to the end,
Songs and sport and frolic dancing,—
These make life have worth to spend!
These give joy, all joy enhancing!
And, as we bend,
Soft looks do blend,
O'er parted lips, from bright eyes glancing.

*ON A CONFEDERATE BATTLE-
FIELD.*

So place you, since our way is barred
By yon dull ditch of water!—
Straight, this side, runs it for a hundred yard;
On that, 'tis little shorter.

Here is the salient. The parapet
—The rains have washed it flat—
Ran so. Right there, in the snow and the wet,
For a week of days I sat.

We dug in haste, for the foe were nigh,
Nor thought of order nor shape:
But all is changed, save the general lie
Of the ground, and this one gap.

Brushwood grew then, thickset and full:
Now these young trees, whose roots
Curl tender fibrils round many a skull,
Whose strength made green their shoots.

Joe died here ; and, yonder in front,
Fell Jim and Adam and Mark.
There was not one left at the end of the hunt,
Save I—I alone in the dark !

The battle was fought and won by their blood :
And the use !—did you ever wonder
How earth's best deeds are often as food
To feed the damn'dst blunder ?

We were chums since boys : 'twas many a day,
Our victuals and drink we did share.
How's it now ? Men don't make new friends, I say,
After their fortieth year.

But if I could, I'd fight again :
I tell you, we're cursed with a fad
For freedom : and the fools think that all men
Are alike,—the good and the bad ;

That God made each race the same and gave
To each a common right :
But I tell you,—one's master ; one's slave ;
And arguing don't make black white.

Gifts don't give ! What men have or win,
They pay for, scot and lot :
For they have no right to anything,
Save this—just what they've got.

And more—till they win their right, 'tis best

They do lack what is ours at birth.

Ah ! I see you think with the chatterful rest

'Till he's free, he's nothing worth !

Can you give a monkey a sense of shame ?

An idiot of good and ill ?

Well ! give a nigger the gift of a name,

Of freedom, if you will !

I don't know Latin nor Greek. Most days,

I like to be out in the sun :

I've read the Bible and Shakespeare's plays,

Some poetry and bits of fun.

But the knowledge I have 's of nature straight

Of men and beasts and birds :

And when I'd see them, I'd speculate,

For books seem mostly words.

And I've never found that life is all one,

Equal and easy and free ;

There's nought, without right,—is subject to none,

Nor bows to no mastery.

And I say—"What a man can't get, don't give him !

What he wins not, let him want !

What he shouldn't have, though you strive, brain
and limb,

To bring him, Nature won't grant !"

Well—'tis but talk. We do as we can ;
For round is the earth as a ball :
But the greatest devil to man is man,
And the keenest foe of all.

When nature gets pinched, and hardships begin,
And there's no more deserts, nor never a fen,
The struggle must come ; and the strongest will win :
And who will the strongest be then ?

His words stopped short. Around was peace :
Above midsummer air :
The hollow murmur 'mid the trees
Just conscious to the ear.

And fancy, thrilled by sunlight warm,
Still sounds, and song of birds,
Could scarce maintain with that earth's form
Those scenes of his rough words.

FAITH.

FAITH will win us every glory :
Fear will rob of every worth :
Trust in that within us : more we
Cannot know of ere death's birth !

None, with timid touch who worketh,
E'en by patience brings to use :
In each trembling utterance lurketh
What will turn it to abuse.

Each emphatic word, when spoken
With the love that opens all,
Makes a way mark ; is a token
Of the good in great and small.

Nothing falters to perfection ;
Nothing wavers into shape :
Nature brings into subjection
Nought with trembling and mishap.

See ! how calmly speaks the meadow
 'Neath the noontide's burning sun ;
And the stream, nigh choked with reed,—lo !
 Surely makes its music run.

Children play ; they know no wavering ;
 Every movement perfect timed :
And the birds, their song notes quavering,
 Still keep utterance perfect rhymed.

Think not we, who would be singing
 Of the truth dear love doth find,
Of its form :—let form be ringing
 Somewhere in the deeps of mind !

Let our hope, high placed and starlike,
 Bring fruition ere we know
How the course is run :—no bar strike,
 Progress maiming, 'cross the flow !

Ah, beyond my best endeavour,
 Higher than the highest flight,
Is that consummation ever
 Placed before me on the height !

And with every failure, spoken
 In drear notes, as speaks the wind,
Yet as sweetly !—"Pilgrim, lo ! when
 Art is Nature, thou wilt find

Wish doth melt into fruition ;
Thought, spontaneous, glow in form :
Faith alone can gain no vision ;
Scale no true height, clear of storm."

"A LAUGHING GIRL!"

A LAUGHING girl!—her years seventeen
The happy school-days done,
Takes pleasure now to be spoken to and seen,
Yet loves to be in the sun,

Whose gay rays slant between the pines
That gather down the cliff,—
Gild rocks and beach and moving lines
Of waves that turn our skiff.

And idle, one, sleeps time away ;
One, studious, reads his book ;
One, with glazed eye, sees waters play,—
Recalls a churchyard nook.

And, near, the children laugh and chirp ;
Such laughter and such prattle !
A mound is built,—the top to usurp
Is victory in the battle.

But play doth pall : she comes all wild ;
Her eyes with merriment fill.
"See, schoolboy yet ; a simple child !
He's at his lessons still."

At him she points, whose eyes, deep fixed,
Turn slowly to her face,
Where mirth, with beauty subtle-mixed,
Ray forth a double grace.

"Nay, Ethel," answers he, "we are
But children, all life through.
For you 'tis play who are so fair :
We have our work to do.

Yet children are we, who must learn,
Each step, a novel task :
'Tis endless all : think you we turn
An ocean in a flask.

See, yon white gulls that seek their prey
With run and jump and flutter !
What know they now of yesterday ?
What think of worse or better ?

As they, so are not we ; we must
Oft hear the voice within,—
In some 'tis stifled ; on some 'tis thrust
In silence or 'mid din.

By you not yet life's fate is known,—
Its dull and fruitless day !
To you all is as all is shown,
And not all mystery.

Yet you have kindly thoughts ; you think
Of others, and you love ;
In household duties form a link ;
Art joyous : 'tis enough !

Let each one follow as he would !
See, one sleeps half the day :
And I read books, or muse and brood :
He mourns his time away.

Then she :—over her face doth pass
A sudden seriousness,—
“ But things are plain as light through a glass,
And certain as truth to us ? ”

“ Ay, certain as light ! ” soft answers he,
“ Or a glass ! but what in sooth
Are they ? If all is mystery,
Then, Ethel, what is truth ? ”

She thinks ; she laughs : “ Oh, you are wise !
But see, the sky is blue ;
And all looks happy to my eyes ;
And this, I feel, is true ! ”

IDLE LOVE.

LOVE, you say, is all a folly,—
Idle jest not meant in truth :
Never worth to waste on all we
Have of life to toy with youth.

Lady, nay, bespeak you better !
Your true words are yet untrue :
Though to me love be a fetter,
'Tis not so to me and you.

When one loves perforce and truly,
And the other will not stir,—
If she, bending, changes, newly
Life doth open unto her.

Opening, shows its deepest treasure ;
Points a meaning where was none ;
Makes dull grey a glowing azure,
As dark seas beneath the sun.

No ! to me she turns a shoulder :
Joy to her my joy is not :
Never may my love enfold her :
Soon by her am I forgot.

"'T WAS IN THE BRIGHT MAY TIME."

'T WAS in the bright May time and the flowers were all
blooming,
When I who had wandered chanced a youth to meet
coming

Alone down the lane :
His suit was of Lincoln, and I asked—"Which your
way, lad?"

"'Tis up yont the hill top, and away, and away, dad,
And hither again."

Then I loitered for a time and I sat me by the low
stile,
When quick came a fair girl, and she sang soft and
low, while

She stepped on her way :
Her face was like a flower, and I asked—"Are you
late, dear?"

"I'm straight for my sister's : I ever go straight, sir!—
Nigh ended's the day."

Prythee, fellow, which your way?
Maiden, maiden, go not you.
Ah! they use you but for play;
Then forget you,—they forget you.

I watched the gloom deepen and the breeze blowing
lowly,
When—hark to two footfalls!—and they move them
most slowly—

They linger, until
“Dost thou love me?” asks a fresh voice. “Do the
stars shine o’erhead?”—he
Doth say—“On to-morrow—on to-morrow wilt thou
wed me?”

“I will, love, I will.”

I, good fellow, know your way:
Maiden, maiden, go you too:
Happy be your wedding-day,
Nor will he—will he forget you!

REGRET.

SPRING brings us light and flowers,
And all her flowers are fair :
Comes summer with fiercer hours,
And kills the light spring flowers ;
Comes autumn, and winter bare.

Life doth befriend us both ways :
Spring flowers and light did bring :
After when memory strays,
Regrets of the dear dead days
Change to hope of the coming spring.

So love, her arms around us,
In all whate'er is given,
By a twofold cord hath bound us :—
By one to earth close wound us ;
One she leads up to heaven.

Then age, with light undreamed !
We see with vision clearer :
The links, twofold that seemed,
Are one. What erst we deemed
Was earth, is heaven grown nearer.

ON THE SAND DUNES.

THE storm is rising, Jean :
Harder the north wind blows ;
And ever and anon,
When the lull has been,
He beats with fiercer blows :
And the waves come on and on ;—
The wolves have hungry maws,
And their forms are dark,
And their tushes are sharp ;
And who can escape their jaws ?

See'st thou the boat, Mary ?
Fouler it grows 'yond the dune ;
But the feather white bit
Of a sail that they carry,
Will bring them in to us soon.
Who knows better to hit
The run of the cove than Paul ?
And the run of the tide,
Where the dog rocks hide,
And ever the sea-fowl call ?

I see no white sail, Jean,
 But a wheeling white sea-mew ;
And his shrill note crying,
As he floats between
 The grey and the black and the blue,
Is as a baby's dying :
 And quickly goes the sun ;
And the moon afraid,
Like a threatened maid,
 Hides 'neath a coverlet dun.

They bide too long, Mary :
 Would they were home ere this !
'Tis for us and the wee ones,
They venture and tarry
 On the sea where the tempest is.
But fear not, though high the surf runs,
 And the storm's ever shifting and veering ;
For—see, through the dark,
Yon black moving mark !
 'Tis they, and Paul is steering !

THE HAPPY DAYS OF LONG AGO.

'Twas in those happy days of long ago,
One summer morning, when all the flowers do blow,
 We were three boys at school,—
Slipped over where the wall did exit yield,
And ran across the long-grassed, dew-sprayed field
 To bathe in the far pool.

The summer mists did band about the trees,
And the deep herbage wetted to the knees
 Us, as we passed along.
Buoyed by what scents and freshness of the morn,
The young cheek flushed, the eye more brightly shone,
 And the young heart beat more strong?

Then in the river plunged we ; deep, more deep,
Till the white light above us showed a single strip,
 We dived ; or, up at length,
Easily swam upon the water, soft and pure,
Showing the white bodies that changed their course
 so sure
 And conscious of their strength.

Then was no pain in early morning hours :
Then was the sweetness, fresh from earth's bright stores,
Breathed without a thought :
Then was all keenness, ardour, quick elation :
Then was all nature one note of exultation,
Coming and not sought.

Then, ah ! then we knew of happiness ;
Of joys that are true ; and hopes that not transgress
Our being's right and rule.
Now we are more free ; with freedom comes not pleasure !
Now we are more strong ; with strength, why not the treasure
Of youth in the days at school ?

Now we have more knowledge, but where the quick
sense glowing ;
Where the keen wish of life ? though more things
knowing,
Wherefore flies our love ?
Why, older as we grow, lose we the pure delights ;
And, as days come, vanish youth's fancy's sights ?
—Remains mere dead stuff !

Gone ! gone for ever ! and tears, unbidden, rise,
Dimming the sight, as throng old memories :
All is changed and gone !
Places are altered : friends, scattered, stand aloof :
But most in me, while Time's slow, dull feet move,
I note what time has done.

TO ——.

I.

HITHER comes this little token,
Winds and waves although at strife ;
Pledge of love that, never sloken,
Welleth from her fount of life !
In the name of wife,
May I salute her, when, oh, when ?

Clasped our arms in all emotion,
Thrilling, kindling through the frame,
Vibrates each, as doth the ocean,
Changing 'neath the moon's pale flame,—
Bound by that name,
Sums to me my life's devotion.

And, till then, when all is ended,
Life and love at length complete,—
One of two together blended,
Make earth roses 'neath the feet,—
This offering sweet
Will touch me,—guard me unbefriended.

II.

Bright the gold sunlight
Streams through the trees ;
Beneath in the one light,
Lie glebes and far leas,
Halls and low villages ;
And her eyes looking far to the verge meet no rim but
the sea's.

Softly she wonders,
“ When will he come ? ”
Ofttimes she ponders,
“ Once, once at home,
Together we stay or we roam.”
And the air seems to echo her thought with its noise
and sweet hum.

Then plucks with a smile
Wild flowers and a fern,—
“ These,—these, the meanwhile,
Will bid him return ;
And my love by them learn ;
But the kiss that I give them to bear him, how may
he discern ? ”

—He sits with the flowers
Lying dead in his hand,
And he thinks of past hours
In her far-away land ;
And the flowers re-bloom and expand
To his eyes, and he kisses them—"Here thy lips
were ; here thy dear hand !"

III.

Fair hair ! I once unwreathed you ;
And in a shower you fell :
And her eyes, from underneath you
Uplooking, to me did tell
Of love so pure, and so unfathomable.

Now, as this tress I touch,
And, past years picturing,
Feel all the want in such,
Then felt not—Time will bring
New hopes, new thoughts, but nought this joy sur-
passing !

For we have sight of things,
Who love, by eyes unseen,
By ears not heard. Love brings
With sorrows, joys and teen,
Knowledge of those deeper, that pass dull sense
between.

So angels are round us, I know,—
Even thou and like to thee :
And all that earth can show,
Riches, power, fame, can be
But as sifted dust to thy love's worth to me.

IV.

My eyes so loving, say you ?
Yea, even so must be :
Are they not, all the day through,
Thinking of thee ?
And in dark shades of night,
When, in all want of light,
Visions to the dead sight
Come unto me?—
Thee gazing lovingly !

The soft eyes look so fondly,
And the lips seem to speak,
As under sleep's wand I
Lie ; and thy meek
Tones on the ear do fall :
“ Come hither ; come to me ! ” call
I. I tremble. “ Through all
Following, I seek
Thee ! ” I wake. “ Did one speak ? ”

Ye vain dreams of the night, fly !
Time, on thy wing, haste !
Oh, haste thee with the light by !
And to me bring taste
Of days coming, when the vision is
No semblance, the eye sees,
Quick fashioned of fancies,—
Are vanished and past ;
But thee with me peaceful at last !

V.

Thou askest, “ Is love enough ? My love,—
Will it suffice for thee ?
No other art I have.” Thy love
Indeed’s enough for me.

Earth keeps no fairer crown to save :
I, looking through the years,
But at my want a doubting have ;
My own unworth brings fears.

Truth urged, right sought for, virtue known,
These loved my sponsors be,
And pledge of deeds ; but chief, my own,
May my dear love to thee !

Who knows not failure? Yet pretence
Judge not to who speaks high,
Though false his step, impure his sense,
And acts to words awry!

And thou wilt guide! with thy cool hand
Hot passion curbed; subdued
Each misgrown impulse;—Love! thy band
Can bring what better good?

E'en if with heaped-up knowledge sown,
All earth's deep secrets won,
What worth to me, save there be known
What joy give good deeds done?

Teach me the life that thou has learnt,
Gathering by day and day!
Though knowledge pass and books be burnt,
Happy must be my way!

VI.

Dear, it is Christmas Day :
May every blessing meet
About thy head, and oh, I pray,
No harm bewray thy feet!

Dear, it is Christmas Day :
 May peace and comfort bring
On dove-soft wings thee rest, and may
 Sweet dreams thy sleep ring in !

Dear, it is Christmas Day :
 May childhood's fancies rise,
Called from their past of joy and play,
 To brighten thy dear eyes !

Dear, it is Christmas Day :
 So let life ordered be,
That future times, as we survey,
 Reflect no shades to thee !

Dear, it is Christmas Day :
 May happy hours attend,
And each succeeding on its way
 Safe lead us to the end.

VII.

I cannot speak thee greeting ;
 Thy lips I cannot kiss ;
Nor can, my love repeating,
Answer those low words, sweeting,—
 Make life worth what it is.

Thou canst not, standing by me,
Lean on my breast thy head,
Clasped in my arms ; and, nigh me,
Feel heart beat heart, and eye be
By soft eye warmed and fed.

Now most I feel thee parted—
To-day of all the days—
When Christmas comes, warm-hearted
With rites of days departed,
And old-world mummeries.

I list to the songs and laughter ;
I join in the frolic and fun ;
But my thoughts, as by one wing's waft, are
Borne to the soon hereafter,
When our two lives are one.

VIII.

'Tis Christmas !—brings no snow to me ;
No partial sun that shines an hour ;
No keen wind cutting 'cross the lea ;
No torpid earth,—can bear no flower ;
No big logs fizzing on the hearth ;
No dark birds flitting from the path ;
Nor bunch of mistletoe, nor holly,
Wreathed with old legends of past ages, hath
Such storied folly !

But summer suns in cloudless skies ;
A cool breeze breathing on the face ;
And all that else in summer lies,
When days tread fast on night's quick trace ;
With green shrubs, showing their gaudy bloom,
And bright-hued flowers that want perfume,
And long grass waving, and tropic trees,
Whose fragile leaves one north wind's breath would
doom
To strew the leas !

We know not, till we feel our loss,
What makes this earth indeed our home :
The fairest forms are vile as dross,
Save touched by what of worth doth come
From loving faces and old smiles
To childhood's dream eyes, caught while is
The rite, now mimic paltry, dear
For being otherwise,—whose simple wiles
Made dark days dear.

And old-world customs, bodying forth
Dead fancies of an elder age,—
The white-haired man that lived up north,
Our Father Christmas ; and his page,
Brings gifts down chimneys ; the old crone

Who shakes her feather bed in the moon,
Making the snow ; goblin ; sprites ; elves ;—
Keep love, nor flowers, bright skies, light breezes
blown,
Can of themselves.

But forwards now I set my face,
Nor think of past, but only thee
Who art my future. In each place
Shines some dim glimmer, borne to me,
Of days to come that fancy brings,
Like water's distant murmurings,
Telling of aided care, of ease,
Of mingled work in hours,—make sweet such things,
Unlike to these.

IX.

The days roll on, the days roll on
With pulses sure though slow ;
And from the year,—is backward gone,
Forward we set our brow.

Though time and troubles blend and meet,
Oppress our hearts with fears,
Still, through short months to come, our feet
Set we to what appears :—

A glorious promise like a star !
Fulfilment every side !
A trust nor Fate, nor shocks can mar,
If fervent we abide !

Faith ! though the future mangled be,
By fate our steps be barred,
'Tis not in vain : nor vain are we.
Love is its own reward.

X.

Love grows stronger :
Days seem longer :
When will all end,
And by a touch be
Vanished and dead to me ;
And thou with a kiss blend
All the to be ?

Lonely the hours break ;
And the long days make
Restless the mind ;
Yearning for time to fly,
Yearning for thee, and, by
Soft arms of thine twined,
Calm live and die.

Say they treasures
Have their measures,
 Bounds and limit?
Nay, who love love aright,
Fill ye the cup quite,
Until ye brim it!
 —'Tis infinite !

From their far heights,
Chastening star lights
 Keep serene eyes :
And as they wait, I feel
Strength through the heart to steal,
Knowing a true voice that sighs,
 “ 'Tis for our weal.”

Let weal come or woe !
As the years flow,
 We cannot change !
We are one heart and one
Soul. Though this life's sands run
Quick, and all things do range,
 We—we are one !

XI.

We have our times of trial, dear :
 We cannot hope to live,
And duties, tasks, to fly all here :
 Life asks we too should give.

Yes, we must give !—but in the gift
That duty marks and delves,
Comes virtue gained : so we do lift
Ourselves above ourselves.

And 'mid what jars to life belong,
Let this, thy thought, revive thee :
Though hours make days, and days are long,
Some day together live we !

And then, though all life duties hath,
Which only make it holy,
Shall peace from troubles shade thy path,
And love kill melancholy.

XII.

What mean pansies? Soft desire :
Ardent love? Nay, such the roses.
Is not warmth their colours fire :
Is not depth their shape discloses?
Calm content? No, this the daisies ;
Pure as light on children's faces.

Hope and thought and memory,
Joy that bears our life along?
Other flowers that blow and be,
Hold their emblems, sing their song.
What then mean the far-eyed pansies?—
Love's still musings : love's dear fancies.

Airy fancies, borne awhile,
As are bubbles in the sun ;
Something twixt a tear and smile ;
Gone ere we with them have done ;
Glancing with a fairy's trip ;
Hovering round the eye and lip.

So they go, we know not whither ;
So they come, we know not whence ;
Like the hues ere sunsets wither,
Too ærial for the sense :
Passing with their golden time,
Out of reach of word and rhyme.

Such bring these ! I lay them here.
Hath the present not its bar ?
Yet with them love smiles at fear,
Leaping o'er what checks there are ;
And rekindling with that train
The past not dead, dear hopes not vain.

XIII.

Sometimes, when thinking of the slow time's lapse,
And looking on the frequent days to come,—
What hindrances and stops : what chance and haps :
What hurts and harms, therein, may house and
home !—
My mind, full of forebodings and pale fears,
Sinks at the prospect of the length of years.

For what irks Fate if, in his onward path,
Our lives beneath his iron heel he crush?
Or will he change at thought of weak one's scath;
Or pity? To him the breaking of a rush,
The mountain downcast, and an insect's crawl
Are equal and the same : he owns no fall.

And our two lives, so fragile, lightly hung
Upon so many slippery threads of chance !—
Which, let one break,—but for a moment swung
Across the awful abyss, to flutter and dance,
Mocked at by glad sunlight : then drop and flee
Through endless space,—soundless nonentity.

So ! is that all? Nay, love, to me not all !
Nor let us, gazing at this one side of life,
Forget the other ! Though what deeds befall ;
Ill aims, sere hopes or troublous forms of strife
Check or make perish the visible frame ; our love,
Buoying o'er the dark, will raise us far above.

We pass and perish, but that can know no change :
Ours is depth and height, it hath nor up nor down :
We, purpose wavering, 'neath breaths of Fortune
range :
It moveless stands, laughing at Fate's black frown :
And, by its strength, constant we wait the end ;
'Thine, mine ; mine, thine ; till time her force doth
bend.

XIV.

A day of spring oft comes when spring should be,
And then is lost
In arms returned of winter that, ruthlessly,
With rain or frost,
Wipes out and mars that earnest purity.

The winds beat down the young buds that peep forth
and show
Their tender hue :
The flowers, just risen their heads, are dead in drifts
of snow,
That, though so few,
Were they not precious unto me and you ?

So these times glare at us : but not for us the hope !
The spring must come ;
The leaves must trim their trees ; fair flowers deck
the slope,
Where bees will roam :
Winter must give to spring and sun their scope.

But these sad times may end in endless tracts of
night,
Shipwreck and loss :
Nought in dull distance but dark grey : uplift no light :
Upraised no cross :
Our hopes thrown off like outside scum of dross !

XV.

At any time the lark mounts to the sky,
In narrowing circles, singing tempestuous love ;
The throstle, from the neighbouring elm top high,
Tunes by the hour his note ; while the far dove
Coos her well-ordered passion without remove.

Let but the sun shine forth and these are gay :
Or moon show in calm night, the nightingale
Answers remote. They want not to display,
Save that times and due seasons may prevail,
What joy is theirs ! what hope ! Love tells its tale.

But we are creatures of another sort :
Our natures mixed in a less hardy frame :
And as life owns its checks, so bears our thought ;
Wild though with yearning, it can find no name :
Eased by no outlet, grief is still the same.

The wrong is ours. I change not ; still am dull,
While 'neath the branches the sunset's rays aglow,
While leaves, the flowers, the grass are beautiful,
And the gold light is playing round my brow,
And 'mong the trees, the soft wind's gentle sough.

These bring not joy : I see them, know them fair :
They are not gay : we cannot move our will :
Without all riches, within all is as bare
As fields that winter handcuffs terrible :
Our ingrate self e'en love makes bitterer still.

Even now 'tis so : I cannot sing to thee :
Long days have passed, and hope seems drowned
in fear :
Churlish I wait and sit and think and see :
—But let thy letter come ; and then !—Ay me !
When will fate yield ; and these days cease to be ?

XVI.

There's a swallow on the wing, Love !
There's a swallow on the wing !
And he skims the dark woods and the pines as he
passes,
Where cooeth the ringdove ;
And he scents the cool breeze o'er the tall waving
grasses ;
And the hope in his breast makes his love song,—
surpasses
What erst he could sing.

Then he flyeth to the sea, Love !

He flyeth to the sea !

And the billows come laughing and playing around
him ;

Laughing and murmuring of thee, Love :

And he joys at their words as they circling surround
him ;

And he leaves the dark land at the edge of its round
rim,

So hastening to thee.

Then he cometh to thy shore, Love !

He cometh to thy shore !

And he holds to the heights that look far to the sea-
ward,

Urged on by the more love :

And he thinks not of up, nor of van, nor of leeward ;

For he knows the one path with its stile that to thee-
ward

Leads on as of yore.

Wilt thou know him when he comes, Love ?

Wilt thou know him when he comes ?

When he flutters with joy and can hardly contain him

To own what life sums,—love ?

For at last to his hopes and his joys doth attain him :

Nor ever the past, without fruit, be in vain. Him—

Not from him thy step roams !

XVII.

(L'ENVOI.)

FLOWERS are plucked and lightly given,—
They are precious though they fade !
Comes another's breath from heaven,
And to us their worth is dead.

Comes another's touch that leads us ;
Comes an influence sweet and new ;
And the present which succeeds, us
Severs from that past we knew.

Then some far day when the shadows
Gloom across the waving lawn,—
Backward glancing o'er those meadows,
Life hath led our stray steps on,—

Comes to mind the still reflection
Of a day when eve did close,
Breathing 'neath its golden flecks one
Deepest love through a white rose.

Lost that glory ! Now I differ,
When that seeming careless day— !
And the lines seem harder, stiffer,
Pencilling in the forward way !

Perished now— ! Break up that vision !
Still before me is the rose :
And the past that has no fission,
Gathers as the present glows.

Severed nought of all the distance,
Leading from that earliest hour,
When our hearts' love spoke insistence
Of its need by one white flower !

And hope breaks not ; onward ranging
Over sunlit prospect, bears
Light and love and joy unchanging,
While the past to dimness wears.

Yet though dim, return at moments
Thoughts, reborn of hours like this,
Hued of brown and gold,—to show whence
Life hath come ; how goes ; when eyes,

Glancing from a flower in quiet,
Gaze o'er fields and purple sea,—
Holped still with its hope, and by it
Sure in trust of days to be.

"THE DAY HATH ITS SUN."

THE day hath its sun and its sunlight,
Its gleams and its glories and power :
The evening its shades and its dun light,
Its holiness, peace and one hour :
And the night hath sweet perfumes and breezes,
When our souls with the silence attune,
And argent o'er hill slope and trees is
The light of the moon.

In the sea, with its motion and breakers,
What hues of dark billow, green wave !
What lapping of waters when the lake is
Scarce ruffled through reeds to the cave !
And on earth, with her corn time and harvest,
What dear love to usward is shown,
When our mother revealeth her fair breast,
And speaketh alone !

She speaks, and her voice in its numbers
Is soft and as perfect as these—
When the stars, in our dreamtime and slumbers,
Are borne on the bosom of seas,—
These whispers of ocean and desert,
These voices from grove and from field ;
For hers too are theirs, and they share it,
As the life that they yield.

Clear hymns she her pæan in the morning,
Free mounting as mounteth the lark,
While the plains of far west are still borne in
The shadowing mists of the dark :
High-rising and all things attaining,
Our courage and heart hopes doth buoy,
While, standing on earth, are we gaining
Some touch of that joy.

Or with noontide in heat and in glamour !—
Then learn we the worth of her song,
When the bees and the birds in their amour
'Mid blossom and shrub, buzz and throng ;
When forth of his field goes the sower,
Who early hath scattered his grain ;
And, hanging his scythe, sleeps the mower
At ease by his wain ?

We hear not ! we pause and we tremble
For hopes that are dead of a day :
We learn not ! we change and dissemble
For desires that are bonden with clay :
And our minds, growing peddling and paltry,
Are full of worm hopes and spawn fears ;
And the mystical notes of her psaltery
Unheard by our ears.

For our life, in its brickroom and wan lines,
Bears up to no star height nor heaven,
Whence the soul, bursting free of dull confines,
Sees the grandeur, to all things is given :
But damp with foul huxtering and traffic,
Is cankered with loathing and lies :
And the face and her figure seraphic
Unseen by our eyes.

And our earth home, to us as a charnel,
Brings fruit not nor fruit-giving flowers,
But the hemlock, the henbane and darnel
And herb-seeds of venomous powers :
For we seek not for fruits that are fruitful,
Who love but the day and its lust ;
Who, fanning past wants of the brute, cull
But dead things of dust.

Yea, as one who long nurtured on poison,
Knows not taste of pure bread, of right food :
So we in the midst of life's foison,
Use the hurtful and hold it the good.
"Are these gains that we pluck by the armful,
Or treacherous or worthless?" we ask :
And we say, "Though ye hold them the harmful,
They respond to our task."

"Let us eat : let us drink : for the morrow !—
Who knows he may call it the day ?
Let us gather of deeds : let us borrow
Of facts that are certain to stay !
Of fancies nor phantoms make trial,
As fireflies, that glitter and pass !
Of all that our sense makes denial,
Let us burn as rank grass !"

Lo ! then, earth, with her softness and beauty
Her colour and fragrance and form,
Her garlands of flowers and of fruit, ye
Do know but as stuff to deform ?
'Tis barren, deserted and sterile,
Save that for the senses, not thee ?
"Yea, truth is but promise,—a fair isle
Seen hovering at sea !"

"It gleams with fair palms and tree branches,
Soft wreathed in a golden-hued mist,
'Neath ardour of sun that enhances,
Engemmed in one sheen amethyst :
But if nearer we come to those glories,
It hovers and changes and glows ;
And our foot, set to step on its shore, is
Ne'er brought to repose."

Nay, with eyes but late filled with that vision,
So glance at the earth by thy feet !
Is it vile, is it dross for derision :
Or holy, most perfect, complete ?
Is it hopeless as anger, or fairer
Than pearls, or the stars, or the sun ?
And the ground that thou standest on, rarer
Than ought thou erst won ?

So rest, Oh my soul, on profusion !
So rest, as in Isles of the Blest !
Not bearing with ought of delusion,
But sustained on our mother's fair breast ,
So rest ! and from eyes that, prophetic,
Hold knowledge of stars and of seas,
Learn of secrets of life, not ascetic,
But rightly at ease !

At ease 'mid the earth toil and travail,
That aids though it hold us thus fast :
Not at promise of future to cavil ;
Not, hopeless, to weary of past ;
Not at hurt and the harm of things shifting,
Not at varying and change, to lose love ;
But using this life, and uplifting
Our song strains above !

In hope of our promise and grandeur ;
With the faith there is nought that can fail ;
As the breeze on our brows doth soft fan, sure
Of love that must gain and avail !
Though the power shows powerless a season ;
Though the feet seem loth of their course ;
Though knowledge doth work as unreason,
Nor worth have not force ;

Yea, though, Time ! thou art brittle and partial,
Art destined, one-sided and full ;
And our days, 'mid thy contests made martial,
Grow biased, unvarying and dull ;
Yet these are our sureties, immortal,
Unpurchased, unfashioned, unseen,
When our hands seem to touch on the portal
And unseen be the seen.

Lo, raised when on high with the mountains,
We gaze at the earth by our feet,—
'Mid silence, hear splashing of fountains ;
'Mid dimness, see waving of wheat ;
And around and above us, the spaces ;
And o'er us, the ether bend blue ;
Then, glory !—we know what embraces
Earth, I and you too !

Shall we call her by name that is nameless ?
Yea, call ye a name as ye will !
In the search, do we learn what is blameless,
In whose breast reunite good and ill !
Thus only is life made in earnest ;
Thus only deep found as the seas :
So striving to know, can we earn rest :—
So only at peace !

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